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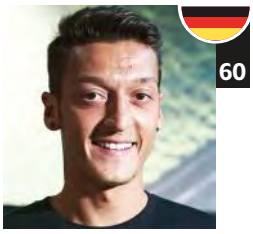

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In Pictures

The global game caught on camera

ENGLAND...Manchester City's Sergio Aguero follows the ball into the net after team-mate Alvaro Negredo (out of the picture) gives City the lead in their Premier League match with Everton

FRANCE...Layvin Kurzawa of Monaco wins a header in the home league game against Bastia

PORTUGAL...Sporting Lisbon's Fredy Montero (left) and Rio Ave's Alberto Rodriguez compete in a league match

SWITZERLAND...Schalke goalkeeper Timo Hildebrand tries to save a shot in the Champions League match away to Basle

EGYPT...Al Ahly fans celebrate at the El Gouna Stadium following their team's CAF Champions League win against Zamalek

ITALY...meeting of the Mohicans as Milan's Mario Balotelli (left) and Napoli's Marek Hamsik come face to face in the San Siro

SPAIN...young Real Betis fans sit on a bench prior to the La Liga match against Villarreal in Seville

PICTURES OF THE MONTH QR CODE

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FROM THE EDITOR

You can count on the fingers of one hand the number of major players who have switched nationality down the years. Cynics might suggest that the debate over Adnan Januzaj (page 24) may have only served the purpose of deflecting attention away from the travails of Roy Hodgson's England in the build-up to potentially hazardous World Cup qualifiers.

The actual number of players who switch nationality may be limited, but that does not mean it's an issue that should be ignored. The fact that Qatar – that country, again! – are finding a way around the regulations should be a matter for concern.

> The beauty of international football has always been rooted in the fact that countries cannot buy success

The beauty of international football has always been rooted in the fact that countries cannot buy success. And yet the world is changing and we have to find a way to accommodate the likes of Kosovo without allowing Qatar to use their financial muscle to twist their way around the rules.

Our deadlines this month prevented us from reporting on all of October's World Cup qualifying matches. But we will continue to preview the teams as they qualify – Argentina, Holland, Italy and United States this month – and we will publish a whole new batch next month.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH

1 FIFA defer decision on moving Qatar to winter ..... page 8
2 Jordan beat Uzbekistan to reach World Cup play-off ..... page 38
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QATAR 2022

FIFA takes the heat out of 2022 winter question

Staging the 2022 World Cup in Qatar in the original June/July slot remains far from out of the question after some nimble manoeuvring by FIFA president Sepp Blatter took the heat out of the winter-timing debate.

A meeting of the FIFA Executive Committee in early October had been expected to address a possible moving of the World Cup to the winter, but it opted instead to set up a working party to investigate the matter further. It will not report back until after next year's finals in Brazil.

By effectively kicking the issue into the long grass, Blatter and his ExCo appear to be hoping that the hot air surrounding the first finals in the Middle East will have cooled by the time the conclusions of a lengthy consultation period put Qatar back on international football's agenda.

> "It is not a text that needs to bind us to June and July"
>
> Sepp Blatter on FIFA's 2022 World Cup documentation

Blatter, who is thought to have backed the USA in the original vote, had initially resisted calls from UEFA boss Michel Platini to switch the 2022 finals to the winter.

Then, during the summer, Blatter emerged as a convert. First he said the issue would go on the agenda in October, then he firmed that up by predicting that the ExCo would approve a switch.

This took the US and CONCACAF by surprise. Respective presidents Sunil Gulati and Jeff Webb were puzzled by Blatter's haste. So was Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, in his role as chairman of the European Club Association.

Rummenigge issued a demand for a football-wide consultation process before FIFA took any decision. So did the European leagues association. So did FIFPro. So did the English Premier League as a back-up to its wholesale opposition to a date switch.

Simultaneously, the International

"For the first time, we have sunshine in the executive committee – we have three ladies!"

Sepp Blatter welcomes the female representatives onto FIFA's ExCo

Not happy...demonstrators outside FIFA's headquarters in Zurich protest against conditions for workers in Qatar

Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) demanded that FIFA remove the World Cup altogether from Qatar unless the country scrapped its medieval kafala system, which imposes a form of "modern slavery" on migrant workers.

Peaceful demonstration

The ITUC has been pressing Qatar and FIFA over the issue ever since the hosting award. Police in Mauritius even had to prevent its demonstrators from staging a small, peaceful demonstration outside FIFA Congress in May. But it was only after *The Guardian* newspaper took up the issue of the death toll of Nepalese workers that the story hit the international headlines and forced its way on to the FIFA agenda on October 4 in Zurich.

Item 25.2 out of 27 – and item 27 was the date of the next meeting – was the one relevant to Qatar. It took a matter of minutes for the ExCo to approve a lengthy consultation process which effectively removes the issue from the headlines until after next year's World Cup, and probably into 2015.

Blatter's backtrack effectively pulled out the rug from beneath Platini's political feet.

The issue will return to prominence only in the run-up to the next presidential election. By then an increasing number of European federations, leagues and big clubs will have come to resent Platini's idea of throwing up in the air their traditional calendars (and lucrative TV contracts).

The alternative date options are April/May and November/December. A staging in January/February 2022 (Platini's original idea) has been ruled out because of the proximity to the Winter Olympics for which the IOC has little climatic room for manoeuvre.

Later Blatter, claiming he had only been trying to stimulate debate, said: "I wanted to create a discussion on summer or winter and I did not expect we would make a decision now. We could not make a decision without consulting our partners."

Hence, the ExCo's only decisions were to reconfirm Qatar's hosting of the 2022 finals and the creation of a lengthy consultation process across the game to be managed by Valcke under the "light supervision" of new AFC president Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa of Bahrain.

One of those issues – and possibly a decisive one – could be the financial damage inherent in switching away from the comparatively competition-free summer date.

FIFA secretary-general Jerome Valcke, earlier, had insisted that none of the losing bidders would be eligible for compensation were the finals to be switched to winter. But Blatter conceded that significant financial and commercial consequences would have to be assessed.

He said: "This issue [compensation] will be an outcome of the discussions and consultations and then we will see what will be the consequences of liabilities or for leagues and other organisations if we played the finals in winter."

Harsh reality...a construction worker in Qatar

Document clarification

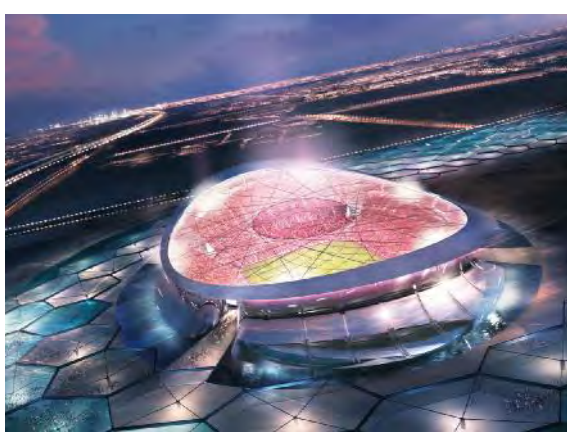
Blatter has also sought to clarify the terms of the bid document which have been in dispute and prompted Australian federation president Frank Lowy to demand compensation in the case of timing change.

Blatter said: "The official documents of FIFA that were given to all the bidders state in principle, in principle [he repeated for emphasis], the competition is expected to be staged in June and July of the year of such competition.

"It is not a text that needs to bind us to June and July, but there has been much made of this so we have decided we will carry out consultations which would include all the participants in an event such as the World Cup.

"In December we will present to the executive committee the road map which will explain where we are heading with this consultation and we will end this consultation after the World Cup in 2014."

Keir Radnedge



The future...what the Lusail Iconic Stadium will look like when it is completed

"The doctor who is treating me is very, very satisfied with me"

Former Switzerland midfielder and national coach Kobi Kuhn battles leukaemia

GOALS we'd like to see again

To see video footage of these goals, and many more that we have selected, scan the QR code using any free QR reader that can be downloaded to your smartphone. You can also see the videos by logging on to http://bit.ly/19tNH62

1 JULIAN DRAXLER
Schalke v Basle
As the ball is cleared from a corner, Draxler volleys home from 25 yards.

2 MANUEL DA COSTA
Sivasspor v Eskisehirspor
A thunderbolt of a shot from 40 yards that the goalkeeper can only watch as the ball flies past him into the top corner.

3 VLADIMIR WEISS
Olympiakos v Paris Saint-Germain
Receives a chipped pass on the right before nutmegging PSG's Marquinhos and beating two more defenders with some deft close control to finish at the near post.

4 LEIGHTON BAINES
Everton v West Ham United
The left-back curls in his second free-kick of the match, this time, over the wall and in off the near post.

5 GLENN VAN DER LINDEN
Royal Mouscron-Peruwelz v Hoogstraten
Van der Linden sees his tame penalty saved by the goalkeeper in the Belgian second division game, then reacts quickest to control the ball with one touch before an acrobatic bicycle-kick finds the top corner.

6 WILDER MEDINA
Barcelona v Deportivo Quito
A lovely one-touch passing move that threads the ball through the Deportivo defence is finished neatly by Medina with the outside of the boot in this Ecuadorian league encounter.

WINNERS

KR
The Reykjavik club became the first team to secure a place in next season's Champions League after winning the Icelandic title.

ARSENAL
Recorded a club-record 10 straight away wins in all competitions with their 2-1 Champions League win at Marseille.

PORTO
Went 75 home league games without defeat, stretching back to 2008, after beating Vitoria Guimaraes 1-0.

LOSERS

ANZHI MAKHACHKALA
The one-time big spenders in Russia were bottom of the league and without a win in their first 12 league games of the season.

ANDRIY SHEVCHENKO
The former Milan and Ukraine striker missed the cut on his pro golf debut, with 26 over par.

STEFANO MAURI
Lazio's captain had his ban for failing to report match fixing increased to nine months. The 33-year-old is out of contract at the end of this season.

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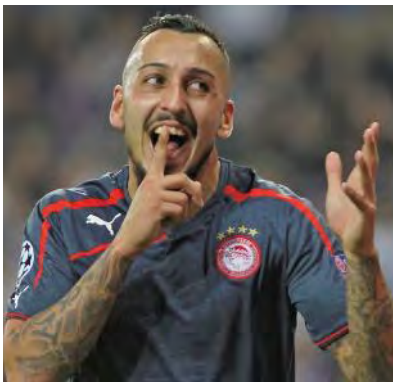
"I am, was, and always will be a supporter of Newell's"

After many years of claiming he was a Boca Juniors fan, Diego Maradona does a volte-face and insists his real love is for Newell's Old Boys, where he briefly played in 1993

HEROES & VILLAINS



Hat-trick...Mitroglou

KOSTAS MITROGLOU

The Olympiakos striker scored his fourth hat-trick of the season to help the Greek league leaders Beat Veria 6-0. It was his second three-goal haul in a week as he became the first Greek player to score a Champions League treble as Olympiakos beat Anderlecht five days earlier.

OGENYI ONAZI

Lazio's Nigerian midfielder gave chase when he saw someone snatch a purse from a tourist's bag in Rome and apprehended the thief. "I chased him down and brought him back to the restaurant," he explained.

HERCULEZ GOMEZ

The USA striker scored a hat-trick after coming on as a second-half sub in his debut for Tijuana as they beat Victoria 6-0 in the CONCACAF Champions League.

JO

The Atletico Mineiro striker, who was without a goal in the Brazilian league for almost 11 months, scored a hat-trick in six minutes in a 3-0 win against Coritiba.

Quick treble...Jo

LUIZ GUSTAVO

After 64 Bundesliga appearances for Bayern Munich without receiving a red card, the Brazilian midfielder was sent off twice in his first three games for new club Wolfsburg.

Seeing red...Gustavo

JERMAINE HUE

Jamaica's 35-year-old midfielder was banned for nine months after testing positive for a banned substance at the World Cup qualifier away to Honduras in June.

ANDRE DIAS

The Lazio central defender had only been on the pitch for three minutes when he barged over Roma's Francesco Totti, who was in a goalscoring position, and was shown a straight red card during his side's Rome derby defeat.

Off...Dias (left) barges over Totti

EVERTON & SANTIAGO WANDERERS

The two Chilean sides had five players sent off between them in a bad-tempered *clasico*.

BRAZIL

Struggling...construction work is behind in Cuiaba

Stadium problems

FIFA secretary-general Jerome Valcke has been to inspect World Cup stadiums amid growing uncertainty over whether Brazil will be able to deliver the final six venues by the December 2013 deadline.

Of the six stadiums yet to be completed, five were less than 90 per cent finished by September. The chief concern is Pantanal stadium Cuiaba, in Mato Grosso state.

There have also been problems in the southern city of Curitiba, where construction was halted after an inspection team deemed the site unsafe for workers.

SWITZERLAND

Life ban...Fernando's appeal was rejected

Fernando's ban extended to life

Sri Lanka's former FIFA ExCo member Vernon Manilal Fernando has been banned from football for life following an unsuccessful appeal against his original punishment. FIFA's appeal panel upheld a request from ethics prosecutor Michael Garcia that the ban be extended from eight years to life.

FIFA has never revealed the reason for Fernando's original ban. The Sri Lankan was a close associate of former AFC president Mohamed Bin Hammam, who was also banned for life by FIFA.

"In Italy I played in a one-on-one style. I took opponents on and if I lost the ball no one really noticed. Here in Spain, if I lose possession the entire stadium picks up on it"

Barcelona's former Udinese striker Alexis Sanchez

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Backing down...Warner chose not to go ahead with his legal action against journalist Lasana Liburd

Warner drops lawsuit against Trinidad journalist

Disgraced former FIFA vice-president Jack Warner withdrew his libel suit against *World Soccer* contributor Lasana Liburd just hours before the case was due to be heard in a Port of Spain court.

Warner, who resigned from all his positions at FIFA in 2011 – thus ending an ethics investigation into him – had issued a writ against Liburd following a story about Warner's involvement in a Haitian financial-aid scandal.

In a report published by the *Sunday Times*, Haiti Football Federation president Yves Bart had accused Warner of failing to relay most of the US$750,000 meant for the impoverished island as it sought to recover from a devastating earthquake.

FIFA did not accept Warner's version of events and the world governing body withheld its annual grant of $250,000 to the Trinidad & Tobago Football Federation (TTFF) and presented it to Haiti instead.

Liburd subsequently followed up the story on his own website, Wired868.com. Warner's legal team did not challenge the content of Wired868's stories on Haiti, but Warner sued based on a sole tweet issued to promote the story.

A spokesman for the TTFF had admitted to Wired868 that the Haiti funds had not gone into the federation's regular bank account, but instead to another account "as requested by Mr Jack Warner".

Liburd, who represented himself during the case, requested that Warner's legal team, which included some of Trinidad's best-known lawyers – Om Lalla, Dereck Balliram and William McCormick QC – provide evidence to disprove the original *Sunday Times* story.

Liburd said in a statement: "As always, Wired868 stands by its content and years of investigative work in football as well as several exclusive pieces on Warner, including his ownership of the Centre of Excellence, ex-TTFF general secretary Richard Groden's affidavit which alleged that Warner collected bribery money from Mohamed Bin Hammam at the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure's office and Warner's letter to Sport Minister Anil Roberts which asked him to starve the TTFF of funds unless the local football body appointed the Caribbean Football Union (CFU) presidential candidate of his choice."

Meanwhile, back at FIFA...

One of Jack Warner's former colleagues on the FIFA executive committee, Marios Lefkaritis of Cyprus, was alleged by *France Football* magazine to have had close business links with Qatar before and after the vote on the 2022 World Cup.

The Lefkaritis family was reported to have sold land worth €32million to the Qatar Investment Authority in September 2011.

Lefkaritis reportedly told Cypriot media that he did not deny the reports. "We are businessmen, we do deals," he said.

Gavin Hamilton

Business links...Marios Lefkaritis

"Despite good performances with my club, I had to wait a long while to be picked. My feeling is that others had it easier"

Borussia Dortmund centre-back Mats Hummels hints at favouritism following criticism of his national team performances from *Bundestrainer* Joachim Low

15 MATCHES THAT MATTERED

Recent crunch games from around the globe

AL AHLY 4
ZAMALEK 2
With victory in this all-Egyptian group game, played in El Gouna, Al Ahly guaranteed their place in the semi-finals of the African Champions League.

VILLARREAL 2
REAL MADRID 2
The world's most expensive player, Gareth Bale, scored on debut for Real – who dropped points in La Liga for the first time this season.

GALATASARAY 1
REAL MADRID 6
Bale was left on the bench next time out as the man he succeeded as the world's most expensive player, Cristiano Ronaldo, scored a hat-trick.

BARCELONA 4
AJAX 0
Lionel Messi matched Ronaldo with a hat-trick of his own 24 hours later in the first competitive meeting between these two European giants.

MANCHESTER CITY 4
MANCHESTER UNITED 1
Manuel Pellegrini won his first Manchester derby as a manager with goals by Sergio Aguero (two), Yaya Toure and Samir Nasri before Wayne Rooney's late consolation.

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN 1
MONACO 1
The first clash of the season between Ligue 1's financial heavyweights ended level after Radamel Falcao equalised Zlatan Ibrahimovic's opener for PSG.

PSV 4
AJAX 0
Second-half goals from Tim Matavz, Jetro Willems, Oscar Hiljemark and Park Ji-sung saw PSV hammer the Eredivisie champions and go top of the table.

KASHIWA REYSOL 1
GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE 4
Marcello Lippi's team virtually secured their place as China's first club to reach the AFC Champions League Final in the competition's current format.

REAL MADRID 0
ATLETICO MADRID 1
Diego Costa scored the only goal of the game in the Santiago Bernabeu as Atletico beat their city rivals in La Liga for the first time in 14 years.

ARSENAL 2
NAPOLI 0
Mesut Ozil scored his first goal since joining Arsenal as Arsene Wenger's men made it two wins from two in their Champions League group.

INTERNAZIONALE 0
ROMA 3
Francecso Totti scored twice as Roma inflicted Inter's first league defeat of the season and maintained their 100 per cent record after seven Serie A games.

RIVER PLATE 0
BOCA JUNIORS 1
With away fans banned for the game at El Monumental, Emanuel Gigliotti sent the crowd home unhappy with the only goal of the game in the *Superclasico*.

CHELSEA 1
BASLE 2
Jose Mourinho's first Champions League game in charge of Chelsea for six years ended in a shock loss at home to the Swiss champions.

ZENIT 4
SPARTAK MOSCOW 2
Zenit moved three points clear of Spartak at the top of the Russian Premier League with this victory at home to their closest challengers.

SHANDONG LUNENG 2
GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE 4
Lippi's side secured the Chinese Super League title – their third in a row – with victory away to second-place Luneng.

Jim HOLDEN

AT THE HEART OF THE GAME

English youngsters have only themselves to blame

Among the very best of recent football books is the autobiography of former PFA Players' Union chairman Clark Carlisle, reflecting with engaging candour about the life of a professional.

One passage strikes more than most, when he despairs of the attitude of modern young English footballers, having just played for lowly York City against the Newcastle United academy side.

"These boys have no respect for senior pros," says Carlisle. "They had travelled down in one of those five-star luxury coaches and afterwards they all plonked themselves back on with their ipods plugged in. While they settled in, the skips of dirty kit were pushed along the path by Peter Beardsley. Yes, the former England great Peter Beardsley.

"They just sat there. The respect isn't there anymore. It was one of the most disheartening sights I've seen."

Here, perhaps, is the most significant reason why the Premier League features only 32 per cent of English players: attitude.

When top managers assess footballers for their first-team squads they look not only at talent, but also at character and value. The first is far less of a problem than the other two.

According to Everton manager Roberto Martinez, who has worked in the English game for a decade, there is no absence of skill and ability in the nation's young players.

"Up to the age of 18 the English are the best in the world," he says. "The under-18s have the same facilities as the first team, the same support team. It's too much."

> How can the heads of young English players fail to be turned when they are paid crazily high salaries

Of course it's too much. How can the heads of young English players fail to be turned when they are driven around in luxury coaches and paid crazily high salaries even though nowhere near first-team action?

They are given foolishly unrealistic expectations, and when it comes to the toughest battle of all – the graduation from potential to serious performance – is it any wonder that so many fail the test?

The Beardsley example is telling. In the current Newcastle first team there is barely a young player who has risen through the ranks. Instead, the side is full of imports, mainly from France, who are more attuned to the hard requirements of the game, and who demand lesser wages.

And this is a club with an English owner and an English manager.

Of course, there is some power in the argument foreign ownership and continental managers have less of a stake in the future of English football, and will have less feeling for the results of the national team.

There is also good reason for the new FA chairman Greg Dyke to set up a commission to investigate ways in which development of young players can be improved and the flow of talent into the England team secured.

Various solutions have been promoted. Martinez likes the idea of B teams of major clubs playing in the lower divisions, as happens in Germany and Spain. Others say that quotas should be introduced to force clubs to field local youngsters. Changes already begun at grassroots level by the FA to modernise coaching should have a positive impact in years to come.

It would surely assist the England team if the best young players are mandated to play in under-17, under-19 and under-21 international tournaments to gain some competition experience, as happens in most other major countries.

The hardest truth of this profoundly significant debate for the good health of English footballers, however, surely lies with how clubs manage the development of emerging talent – and the mentality of these youngsters themselves.

Too much too soon from the clubs cannot be good for them. But promising footballers need to understand the ultimate responsibility for their progress lies squarely with their own attitude.

Today, they sit on five-star luxury coaches and watch legends do the donkey work that was for generations the instructive job of apprentices in English football.

Clark Carlisle is correct. It is a thoroughly disheartening sight. WS

"I never want to speak to this man again"

Salzburg boss Roger Schmidt (left) takes exception to Rapid Vienna's assistant coach, Carsten Jancker, ordering his players to "go in harder" on Brazilian striker Alan

REPORTS we couldn't make up

1 A Dutch referee was left embarrassed when he went to book Heerenveen defender Joey Van den Berg during a domestic Cup tie against Twente. When he reached into his pocket in order to show the offender a card, experienced official Pieter Vink realised that he had actually forgotten to take his cards out on to the pitch with him.

Vink had changed his shirt at half-time because of heavy rain in the first half and had forgotten to transfer his cards over.

When he realised there were no cards in his pocket, Vink described himself as feeling "sick to the stomach".

No cards to play...embarrassed referee Vink

Beat it...Michael Jackson's statue is removed from Craven Cottage

2 One of the first acts of Fulham's new owner, American billionaire Shahid Khan, was to order the dismantling of the statue of pop singer Michael Jackson.

The bizarre statue was erected just outside the club's stadium in 2011 by then-owner Mohamed Al Fayed, who claimed the now deceased singer became a fan of the club after visiting Craven Cottage in 1999 for a game against Wigan Athletic when both teams were in the second tier of English football.

3 Spanish third division side La Hoya Lorca have sprouted out with their choice of away kit for the last two seasons.

The club are based in Murcia – an area known as "the vegetable garden of Spain" – and are therefore sporting a green kit that more than resembles a head of broccoli.

The vegetable is the third-largest export crop grown in the region and the club's kit was designed deliberately to acknowledge its popularity. So far, the broccoli kit has proved lucky: La Hoya Lorca are just below the promotion play-off places in their Segunda B group.

Going greens...La Hoya Lorca's kit

4 Feyenoord fan Amanda Den Hartog has organised a campaign to get an incongruous street name removed from her home city of Rotterdam.

Ajaxstraat is one of a number of roads in her Rotterdam neighbourhood that have been named after Greek gods. But Den Hartog has begun a campaign to expunge the name of bitter Amsterdam rivals Ajax from the area.

Campaigner...Den Hartog

"An Ajaxstraat [Ajax Street] does not belong in Rotterdam," said Den Hartog, who is petitioning the local council to re-name the road.

5 The arrest of referees for driving in an allegedly hijacked car caused an hour delay to the start of a South African Premier Soccer League game.

The refereeing team for the match, on the opening weekend of the new season, were arrested at a toll booth on their way to Rustenburg after the car in which they were travelling had been reported stolen.

It forced the league to swiftly call in another set of match officials as emergency replacements, causing a delay to the match between hosts Platinum Stars and Bidvest Wits at the Royal Bafokeng Sports Palace, one of the venues for the 2010 World Cup. The match, which was being screened live on television, kicked off 60 minutes behind schedule.

Meanwhile, the original match officials were taken to a police station in Pretoria but later released.

The car had been hired from a major company as is customary for travel for matches for match officials and erroneously reported as having been hijacked days earlier. They spent several hours behind bars, after which the car-hire company apologised profusely for the mistake.

OBITUARIES

Three-time title winner...Broadbent

PETER BROADBENT (1933–2013)
An inside-forward who helped Wolverhampton Wanderers, under the long-ball management of Stan Cullis, win the Football League title in 1954, 1958 and 1959, and the FA Cup in 1960. He was also a member of England's squad at the 1958 World Cup finals in Sweden. Altogether he played seven times at senior international level, scoring two goals.

GERRIE MUHREN (1946–2013)
A European Cup winner on three successive occasions with Ajax – in 1971, 1972 and 1973 – he later played for Real Betis in Spain and was capped 10 times by Holland. His younger brother, Arnold, played for Ipswich Town and Manchester United in England.

European champion...Muhren

EMMANUEL QUARSHIE (1954–2013)
Captain of the Ghana side that won the African Nations Cup in 1982, the midfielder also won the African Cup of Champions Clubs (now the CAF Champions League) two years later with Zamalek of Egypt.

Paul
GARDNER

THE WORLDWIDE VIEW

Returning to England, land of the past

In my gloomier moments I fear for British football. It appears to me as an almost folkloric ritual, in which ancient practices and long out-dated prejudices rule. A situation ripe for the winds of change.

But thus it has been for decades, with so little sign of anything shifting.

I have to admit that my gloomier moments usually come when I visit the UK and find myself face to face with the beast that is British football.

I'd like to believe that, within the soul of British football, there is the spirit of something more adventurous, more modern, a spirit struggling to be free and all that stuff. But there's not much evidence of that. I mean, can anyone seriously claim Roy Hodgson represents the future?

I can turn to the brothers Neville, stalwart warriors of English football, to make the point that the British game is stuck in a time warp – something they applaud.

Brother Gary has used his Sunday newspaper column to explain that "what made British football great" has been forgotten. He doesn't tell us when this mythical era occurred, but it was presumably in the 1960s, when England won the World Cup. Back we go, to the days of hard work, the notion of high pressure and winning the ball back quickly. That's what the coaches – among them Nobby Stiles – used to demand at Manchester United when Gary was a lad.

Nobby Stiles leading the charge towards greatness? Can one take this seriously? Anyway, what happens when all the pressure pays off and the ball is won? What then? Not a word about that from Gary.

His brother Phil then regaled a TV documentary with a yarn about how, when Cristiano Ronaldo arrived at United, he was "a diver", so "a massive toughening up process" began. In training, every time Ronaldo got the ball, "Roy Keane, Nicky Butt, and Paul Scholes kicked him – not just once, they kicked him every day, every week, all season". What fun! Kicking an opponent (even though he is one of your own players) without a referee to stop you. Stiles would surely approve.

But Ronaldo was a foreigner, and beneath the stubborn British resistance to change one can detect something surely indigenous to British life in general: a formidable suspicion of, hostility to, anything foreign. "We have been hugely influenced by the influx of foreign managers and players" says Gary Neville, and you know he's not happy about that – even though he reckons those pesky foreigners are "ahead" of the Brits.

> Getting stuck in, hoofing the ball down field, maybe seasoned with some xenophobia. Does that sound a prescription for progress?

That same reluctance to embrace innovation is at work within the Football Association. How extraordinary that the FA, promoting St George's Park, its marvellous new football centre, feels obliged to trumpet something that it does not do there, stating: "In some quarters it is still believed that the Football Association coach education pathway champions a direct method of play, based on a long-ball approach. This is not the case."

Clear enough, but undermined by the FA's action in hiring John Beck as an instructor for its coaching courses. This is the man who, during his years as manager at Cambridge United was probably the most prominent exponent of "the long-ball approach".

Yes, that was 20 years ago, but that merely underlines just how persistent the ancient beliefs are in the almost mummified world of British football. Put at their most basic, those beliefs are nothing more than getting stuck in, and hoofing the ball down field, maybe seasoned with some xenophobia. Does that sound like a prescription for progress? WS

"Ricardo was looking for somewhere to live and because I've an agency in Andorra, he asked me for advice"

Barcelona president Sandro Rosell (left) is accused of helping disgraced ex-Brazilian federation chief Ricardo Teixeira hole up in Andorra, who conveniently have no extradition treaty with Brazil

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

IN

Chance...Poyet

EUROPE

Former Holland coach **BERT VAN MARWIJK**, who had been out of work since his country's three group defeats at Euro 2012, replaced Thorsten Fink in charge of Hamburg. Fink was fired after a 6-2 Bundesliga loss to Borussia Dortmund.

Dismissed by second-tier Brighton & Hove Albion in June, **GUS POYET** was appointed Sunderland manager after Paolo Di Canio was sacked with the club bottom of the Premier League. Former England boss **STEVE MCCLAREN** took over at Derby County following the dismissal of Nigel Clough, who had been the fourth-longest serving manager in English football. Fellow Championship club Queens Park Rangers signed Uruguay forward **JAVIER CHEVANTON** on a three-month deal.

KENNY DALGLISH, who was sacked as Liverpool manager in May 2012, returned to the club as a non-executive director. Former players **ROBBIE FOWLER, STEVE MCMANAMAN** and **ROB JONES** also rejoined the club to help coach the under-21 and under-18 sides.

HERVE RENARD, who led Zambia to success in the 2012 African Nations Cup, quit his role as coach of the national side to take charge

Club job...Renard

of Ligue 1 side Sochaux, replacing Eric Hely, who resigned after their 5-1 defeat at Guingamp.

Djurgarden's **PER-MATHIAS HOGMO** replaced Egil Olsen as coach of Norway's national side. Olsen agreed to stand down following the World Cup qualifying defeat at home to Switzerland.

GIAN PIERO GASPERINI took over from Fabio Liverani as coach of Genoa after just six games as the club made its worst Serie A start since 1983. Former Internazionale boss Gasperini was previously in charge of the club from 2006 to 2010.

Relegated to Serie B at the end of last season, Palermo replaced 2006 World Cup winner Gennaro Gattuso with **GIUSEPPE IACHINI** after a 2-1 defeat at Bari left the side 12th in the Italian second tier.

Fifth in two years...Preud'homme

Former Belgium goalkeeper **MICHEL PREUD'HOMME** was appointed Club Brugge's fifth coach in two years. He succeeded Juan Carlos Garrido who was sacked after 10 months in charge, despite the club being unbeaten in the league. Preud'homme left Al Shabab after the Saudi side were knocked out of the AFC Champions League quarter-finals on away goals by Japan's Kashiwa Reysol.

CEDOMIR JANEVSKI stepped down as national coach of Macedonia to replace Enzo Scifo, who was sacked by struggling Belgian side Mons.

Romanian forward **CIPRIAN MARICA**, who had been without a club since he left Schalke at the end of last season, signed for La Liga side Getafe.

ANTE SIMUNDZA quit second-tier side Aluminij to take charge of Maribor after Ante Cacic left less than four months into the job with the team in pole position in the Slovenian top flight.

SOUTH AMERICA

Nautico, who were bottom of the Brazilian league, named their seventh coach of the season when **MARCELO MATELOTTE** succeeded the 16-day reign of Levi Gomes. It is Matelotte's third coaching post of the season, having previously been in charge at Santa Cruz and Sport Recife.

AFRICA

RUUD KROL agreed a two-month deal to lead Tunisia's national team in their World Cup play-off against Cameroon. The Dutchman, who will combine the job with coaching club side Sfaxien, succeeds Nabil Maaloul who resigned in September.

Two-month deal...Krol

New job for Mancini after Gala sack Terim

Former Manchester City manager **ROBERTO MANCINI** signed a three-year deal to take charge of Galatasaray after they parted company with Fatih Terim.

Terim guided the Istanbul club to the Turkish title last season, as well as the Champions League quarter-finals. However, relations between Terim and club chairman Unal Sysal deteriorated after he agreed to also coach Turkey's national side, in addition to his duties with Gala.

Return...Mancini is Galatasaray coach

"I hate him and his arrogance"

Ex-Holland forward Rob Rensenbrink resists sitting on the fence when asked his opinion of Oranje coach Louis van Gaal (right)

Appointments, sackings and loans

Former Spain and Cameroon coach **JAVIER CLEMENTE** agreed to replace Erbish Abdelhafidh in charge of Libya's national side.

ASIA

Former Argentina and Valencia midfielder **PABLO AIMAR** signed a two-year deal with Malaysian club Johor Darul Takzim that, according to his new club, made him the "highest paid foreign player to have ever graced Malaysian football". The 33-year-old was without a club after leaving Benfica at the end of last season.

Highest paid...Aimar

HAKEEM SHAKER stepped up from his role with Iraq's youth squad to take charge of the country's senior side following the dismissal of Serbian coach Vladimir Petrovic. Shaker led the national team to runners-up spots at both the WAFF Championship last December and January's Gulf Cup of Nations during a previous spell as caretaker following the departure of Zico.

EUROPE

Nuremberg sacked coach **MICHAEL WIESINGER** after the side failed to win any of their eight opening Bundesliga games.

MITCHELL VAN DER GAAG stepped down as coach of Portuguese top-flight side Belenenses after he collapsed during a 1-0 win against Maritimo. The 41-year-old Dutchman, who has a history of heart problems, briefly lost consciousness during the game and said: "For now I'm going to stop working and I will solve my problem. I will do everything to come back as soon as possible."

AZ parted company with coach **GERTJAN VERBEEK** despite victories over Ajax and PSV this season, and a winning start to their Europa League group.

No repeat...Lennartsson

Last season's Swedish champions Elfsborg sacked coach **JORGEN LENNARTSSON** with four games of the current campaign remaining.

Relegation struggle...Christensen

PAULO SERGIO parted company with APOEL after less than five months in charge of the Cypriot title holders after their 3-0 Europa League defeat by Eintracht Frankfurt.

Tromso dismissed coach **AGNAR CHRISTENSEN** in the wake of a 3-2 home defeat by Start which left the Norwegian side in a relegation battle with five league games to play.

SOUTH AMERICA

CARLOS ISCHIA became the third coach of the season to quit Racing Club in Argentina. Colon are also searching for a new coach after **RUBEN FORESTELLO** resigned from his post.

AFRICA

STANLEY TSHOSANE, who took Botswana to their first ever Africa Nations Cup finals last year, had his contract as coach of the national team terminated.

Although **PAULO DUARTE** was sacked as coach of Gabon's national team after a series of poor results, the Portuguese has retained his position as technical director until the end of his contract, which expires in April 2014.

OUT

Staying...Duarte

Ex-national coaches out

Former Brazil boss **MANO MENEZES** quit his post with Flamengo after just fourth months in charge. He was the third coach to leave the club this year. Fellow ex-national coach **DUNGA** was sacked by Internacional after just 10 months in charge.

Short stay...Menezes quit Flamengo after just four months

Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Di Canio was an accident waiting to happen

With sour inevitability, Paolo Di Canio's brief reign as Sunderland manager came to a sticky end, ousted at the last, it seems, by player power. But what on earth possessed the club's American owner, Ellis Short, to appoint him in the first place?

Di Canio, one of the best players never to be capped by Italy, was throughout his playing career explosive, confrontational, rebellious and sometimes violent. Read his autobiography if you doubt me.

Surely someone should have told Short, who clearly has scant knowledge of north-eastern society and its memories, that the local ex-miners loathed the fascism for which Di Canio, with his salutes and his perverse admiration for Benito Mussolini, is so passionately an exponent.

That 3-0 win at Newcastle United, when he dramatically went down on his knees on the touchline mud, provided a brief hiatus, but when his two fellow Italians, the director of football Roberto De Fanti and the chief scout Valentino Angeloni, brought in a host of foreign players in the summer, you could tell the writing was on the wall – inexorably so when the season began so badly.

Di Canio's authoritarian, flamboyant, impulsive manner of command had scant hope of working at a major club rather than with a lesser one such as Swindon Town, although Glenn Hoddle showed what could be done there.

Having said which, I must say that I have always personally liked Di Canio, found him a stimulating and eloquent figure. On the playing field he could be a joy to watch, with his adept ball control, his originality, his occasional quixotic moments – such as the day when playing for West Ham United at Goodison Park he refused to score with the injured Everton goalkeeper lying prone in the penalty area. Other moments, of course, were less admissible, such as pushing the referee over that afternoon at Sheffield Wednesday, with a long resultant ban.

I wonder only how long his two Italian sidekicks will stay at Sunderland? New manager Gus Poyet is unlikely to be at ease with them.

Doomed from the start...Di Canio's explosive management style was never going to work at a top-flight club such as Sunderland

Has Mourinho lost his mojo?

Could "the Special One", Jose Mourinho, have lost the plot and his way? In the words of the adage, lightning doesn't strike twice, and his return to Chelsea has been anything but serene.

True, there was a promising beginning when his team, without all but one of its costly new stars, went to Prague and lost to Bayern Munich only on penalties in the UEFA Super Cup, having been down to 10 men after Ramires was sent off in the second half.

I loathe the term "man management", with its soulless implications, but if you substitute the term "practical psychology", it is more acceptable, and in that Mourinho now seems to be gravely wanting. Alhough Fernando Torres is scoring the occasional spectacular goal – and seems, at long last, to be starting to justify something of his £50million fee – Mourinho's dealings in strikers have made scant sense.

Plainly still in need of a successor to Didier Drogba, he allowed the precocious and prodigious Romelu Lukaku to go out on loan again, this time to Everton. At 6ft 3in and strongly built, he surely could be an ideal successor to Drogba. Instead, as he bravely and clearly showed recently at West Ham, when he scored the winning goal with a header and was knocked out in the process, he is a formidable asset. Facile talk about his needing the greater experience he will get on loan makes no sense.

> "I loathe the term 'man management' and its soulless implications, but Mourinho seems to be gravely wanting"

And little sense is made by allowing Victor Moses to be lent to Liverpool.

Meanwhile, where was the "man

Heir apparent...Lukaku looks an obvious successor to Drogba for Chelsea, but they have loaned him out to Everton for the season

management" in dropping David Luiz and Juan Mata, not merely to the bench but from the whole squad, after the disappointing mediocrity of the display against Basle?

Mourinho's disregard of Mata, named as Chelsea's best player last season, is peculiarly perverse. If the expensive Oscar and Eden Hazard are commanding places in midfield, Mata could operate perfectly well on the left flank.

Acquiring Samuel Eto'o, once such a formidable goalscorer and a star of the Internazionale team led so successfully by Mourinho, was surely a retrograde move, given the player's waning form in Russia. As for Demba Ba, who made such an impact when he arrived last season from Newcastle United, he seems to have been cast into oblivion.

The case against Qatar is loud and clear

At last, a leading newspaper columnist, Martin Samuel, has trenchantly put the case for taking the 2022 World Cup away from Qatar, where it should never have been awarded in the first place.

My certainty that there was dirty work at the crossroads within the Augean Stables that men call FIFA remains. Now, while certain experts feebly assess the possibilities of playing the tournament in the Qatar winter, Samuel has blown the whole shabby pantomime apart.

He acutely points out that a lawyer called Michael Garcia was instructed by FIFA, for once to be given credit for its initiative, to investigate the bidding process which assigned the 2022 World Cup to Qatar.

Though Garcia's initial response has been somewhat sanitised, speaking not so much of the evident corruption but of "political influence on executive committee members", it is still potentially a time bomb.

Whatever the possible understatement, the can of worms has surely been opened. And as Samuel shrewdly suggests, "it is enough for a re-vote". Not least because, as he cogently points out, FIFA didn't actually vote on a World Cup which would take place in the Qatari winter.

Qatar 2022: the moral vacuum

Predictably, FIFA is at odds with those American TV companies, such as Fox, which have paid vast sums to televise the 2022 tournament in their own summer season, with no desire to cut across their normal sporting programme in winter.

There are suggestions that they could be bought off. The moral question, which has been raised in various quarters, is undeniably powerful, even irrefutable. In putrescent little Qatar, workers not least on World Cup stadia, mostly from Nepal, are treated like serfs.

Alas, we know all too well that when it comes to world sporting events, morality goes out of the window.

Russia, so aptly described as a Mafia state by an American diplomat, was awarded the winter Olympics.

Argentina, at a time when political opponents became *los desaparecidos*, the so-called "disappeared" – many dropped out of helicopters into the sea or tortured in prisons – was able to stage the 1978 World Cup.

In Mexico City shortly before the start of the 1968 Olympic Games, government troops slaughtered more than 300 students in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, to the studious indifference of the ineffable Avery Brundage, president of the Olympic Committee, who had happily overseen the Berlin Olympics of 1936, which were turned into a Nazi festival with Jewish athletes excluded.

Ah, yes, the show must go on. Who knows, it might indeed go on, in winter, without the European countries' participation. Now that could be quite a compromise. **WS**

Protest...the media expressed doubts about awarding the World Cup to Russia and Qatar

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Spoilt for choice...Januzaj

The nationality question

Manchester United's Adnan Januzaj could represent six different countries and his situation has sparked a major debate about international allegiance. Gavin Hamilton reports

What nationality is Adnan Januzaj? The Manchester United winger, who has been the early-season revelation in England, faces a thoroughly modern dilemma. The 18-year-old is yet to declare his international allegiance and is eligible to play football for six different countries.

His family fled Kosovo during the Yugoslav civil war and is said to be keen for him to represent their home country one day. The situation is complicated by the fact that Kosovo is not yet fully recognised by FIFA, while Albania, Serbia and Turkey (through his grandparents) are alternative options for Januzaj. He could also represent Belgium, the land of his birth, although the family is reported to have rejected overtures from the Belgian FA.

That leaves England. In 2016, after five years of residency in the UK (he joined United in 2011), that could be an option. But by then, such is his talent, it will probably be too late.

The point was not lost on England manager Roy Hodgson, who says: "There's no doubt that he's a real talent and we have our eyes on him, but a lot will have to be discussed.

"He's been with United for a long period of time and, of course, that discussion will have to be seriously debated before we start naturalising players.

"Yes [he could play for England] down the line if he becomes naturalised or a home-grown product."

Hodgson is no stranger to the issue of player naturalisation. The Switzerland side which he took to the 1994 World Cup contained a number of players – including Kubilay Turkyilmaz and Ciriaco Sforza – who were naturalised Swiss citizens.

Hodgson's comments sparked a debate in England which was further inflamed by comments from Arsenal midfielder Jack Wilshere, who said: "The only people who should play for England are English people. If you live in England for five years, it doesn't make you English."

Meanwhile in Spain, La Liga's most in-form player, Diego Costa of Atletico Madrid, has become a cause celebre for his desire to play for the world champions just months after making his international debut for Brazil.

Costa, who led the Spanish goalscoring charts with 10 goals in his first eight games, can play for Spain because he has lived in the country for more than five years and has not played a competitive match for the land of his birth. His appearances for Brazil earlier this year were in friendlies against Italy and Russia.

> "If you live in England for five years, it doesn't make you English"
> England midfielder Jack Wilshere

Paperwork delays – believed to be a reluctance on the part of the Brazilian federation to provide a certificate confirming his appearances for Brazil – delayed the switch in time for Costa to play in Spain's final World Cup qualifier.

But coach Vicente Del Bosque was keen on selecting the player.

"His performances have been fantastic, not just as a lone striker but also across the whole attacking line," said Del Bosque. "He could be a very valuable member of the squad who can drop deep and push on.

In form...national coach Del Bosque wants Brazil-born Costa to play for Spain

"He's a very interesting player for us. Circumstances mean he's not with us yet, but he's a phenomenal player and we'll have to keep trying to bring him in to the national team."

The issue of player naturalisation is as old as the World Cup.

Italy's *oriundi*

Italy have been using "*oriundi*" since the 1930s; indeed, their 1934 World Cup-winning side contained five such players, all born and raised in South America before moving to Europe to play professional club football in Italy: Raimundo Orsi, Luis Monti, Enrique Guaita, Atilio Demaria and Anfilogio Guarisi.

Italy continued the trend in the 1950s and 1960s. The 1962 World Cup squad featured Omar Sivori and Jose Altafini, who had previously been

capped by Argentina and Brazil respectively.

More recently, Argentina-born Mauro Camoranesi was a member of the victorious Italy team at the 2006 World Cup.

Since then, Italy have given caps to Giuseppe Rossi (who was born and raised in the USA), Buenos Aires-born Pablo Osvaldo and Thiago Motta, who played for Brazil's under-23 side.

Italy coach Cesare Prandelli defended his selection of Motta in 2011, stating: "He has maintained the Brazilian technique and acquired a European mentality, so he goes into the tackle when he has to."

"The issue of the *oriundi* has never been a problem. It is the future of football. Just look at our youth academies, where 60 per cent of the young players are foreign."

Two of the world's greatest players, Alfredo Di Stefano and Ferenc Puskas, played for Spain in addition to their native countries, Argentina and Hungary respectively, while Di Stefano also played for Colombia during his time there in the late 1940s,

FIFA changed the rules on international eligibility in 2003 after Qatar tried to fast-track the naturalisation of striker Ailton and two other Brazilian players, Dede and Leandro. Ailton was reportedly offered US$1million to leave Werder Bremen and adopt Qatari nationality.

"It is against the spirit of the game," Sepp Blatter said at the time, "and FIFA will aim at curbing this practice."

The period of residency needed to switch nationality was raised from two to five years, forcing Qatar to drop their plan.

FIFA made a further change to the rules when it allowed players who had played for one country at youth level to switch at senior level. This was designed to allow African players who had grown up in Europe, notably France, and played for their adopted country at youth level, to switch to the country of their birth.

Swap...Di Stefano (left) and Puskas (right) played for Spain in the 1960s

However, the rule was criticised recently by the US federation president Sunil Gulati, who said: "It cannot be right that a player can play in a World Cup Final at youth level for one country and then switch to another country entirely at senior level."

Gulati pointed out that the US had

Joyous...Senna celebrates after Spain win the 2008 European Championship in Austria

lost players such as Rossi and Neven Subotic (who was born and raised in the USA before opting to play for Serbia) but had also gained other players such as Jermaine Jones, born in Germany to an American GI father, who represented Germany at under-21 level and played friendly matches at senior level.

Naturalised Brazilians

Qatar were by no means the first country to try to naturalise Brazilian players. Francileudo Santos and Clayton both played at the 2002 World Cup for Tunisia, while Marcos Senna was granted Spanish nationality in 2006 and played a key role in Spain's Euro 2008 victory.

In Japan, Wagner Lopes, Alex Santos and Rui Ramos all played for the national side after becoming established performers in the J.League.

Former Porto, Barcelona and Chelsea midfielder Deco is now back in his native Brazil after many years in Portugal, during which time, he became a Portuguese citizen and starred for his adopted country when they hosted Euro 2004.

Other Brazilians to take Portuguese nationality include Pepe and striker Liedson. Shakhtar Donetsk striker Eduardo moved to Croatia aged 16 and subsequently married a Croatian before making his international debut in 2004. He has since been followed by another Brazilian, Sammir, who also made his name at Dinamo Zagreb.

Even Germany have gone down the naturalisation route. Brazilian-born Cacau, who arrived in Germany as a 19-year-old for non-footballing reasons, went on to become a member of their 2010 World Cup squad. But Sean Dundee, the South African who switched nationality in the late 1990s after a prolific spell at Karlsruher, was never capped at senior level.

Perhaps the most curious case of an international nationality switch was that of Aleksandar Duric, who made his debut for Singapore at the age of 37, having previously represented Bosnia at canoeing at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. A peripatetic footballing career eventually took

KOSOVO
Displaced footballers around Europe

Choice...Behrami (in white) represented Switzerland against Albania in October's World Cup qualifier

Adnan Januzaj is another example of the displaced Kosovan nationals who are across Europe since the break-up of the former Yugoslavia.

Kosovo is an independent state bordering Albania and within the former Yugoslavia but is not recognised by Serbia. The national team has been formally recognised by FIFA and allowed to play friendlies. But UEFA, bowing to pressure from Russia and Serbia, has so far refused recognition.

Kosovo's international isolation has forced many of its best footballers to seek international recognition elsewhere, notably Albania and Switzerland, where many Kosovan refugees were granted sanctuary during the civil war.

Xherdan Shaqiri, Granit Xhaka and Valon Behrami, were all born in Kosovo but are now representing Switzerland, while Lorik Cana, who was born in Albania of Kosovan heritage, now captains Albania.

The Kosovan FA would like to see FIFA allow a one-off nationality switch if they are accepted into FIFA.

When Switzerland played Albania in a World Cup qualifier, nine of the starting line-ups were born in Kosovo, or had roots in the region.

Granit Xhaka's elder brother, Taulant, has played for Switzerland at under-21 level but is considering an invitation to switch to Albania at senior level.

In England, the most famous Kosovan footballer has been Shefki Kuqi, once of Blackburn Rovers, who opted to play for Finland, where he and his family had been granted political asylum following the civil war. His brother, Njazi, has also played for Finland.

Aleksandar Duric has been capped by Singapore , having previously represented Bosnia at the Olympics...at canoeing

him to the Singapore S-League.

Many of the Brazilians who have switched nationality were effectively economic migrants: players who moved to another country in search of work. A more recent development has been that of the political migrant or refugee, a category that includes Januzaj.

Zlatan Ibrahimovic

The most famous such player is Zlatan Ibrahimovic, son of a Bosnian father and Croatian mother, who met in Sweden having fled their homelands to escape the civil war

Saido Berahino, the West Bromwich Albion striker who recently scored a wondergoal against Manchester United, has already represented England Under-21s, having arrived in England aged nine as a political refugee from the war in Burundi.

Former Bolton Wanderers midfielder Fabrice Muamba was a refugee from the civil war in DR Congo, while Victor Moses was eligible to play for England but opted for Nigeria despite fleeing the country as a young boy following a family tragedy.

And Moses was not the only player England missed out on, either. Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Lewis Holtby was born and raised in Germany to an English father.

Sporting chance...Bosnian Olympic canoeist Duric (in red) played for Singapore

New Lion...Berahino

England's national team has been slow to accept possible nationality switches. Spanish players Manuel Almunia and Mikel Arteta were both mooted as possible internationals but faced opposition from many within the game. That was despite the Football Association's preferences for foreign managers for much of the past decade.

English football has also been slow to realise the benefits of tapping into its colonial past – in contrast to France, who won the World Cup with a team comprised of many players born in former colonies.

Similarly, Belgium are currently enjoying success with a national squad made up of players such as Marouane Fellaini, Romelu Lukaku and Christian Benteke. In the past, many of these players would have opted to play for the land of their parents, but now feel more assimilated to their adopted country.

As Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger says: "I believe you are from the country where you feel the most comfortable with the culture of the country."

For Adnan Januzaj, it remains to be seen what that country is. **WS**

QATAR
Bending the rules to breaking point

Following the debacle over Ailton's failed naturalisation, Qatar appeared to scale back their plans to field players from other countries.

However, in recent years, they have adapted to new FIFA regulations requiring a five-year residency and handed passports to players from South America and Africa.

Uruguayan striker Sebastian Soria was signed by Qatari club Al Gharafa in 2004 and subsequently offered Qatari citizenship. He made his debut in 2006, while under the charismatic French coach Bruno Metsu many other foreign players were naturalised and given their chance at international level.

They include Ghanaian-born midfielder Lawrence Quaye and Brazilian schemer Fabio Cesar. Other players were born in Senegal, Yemen, Kuwait, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

A more significant development in the long term will prove to be the role played by the Aspire youth academy system. The Qatari-funded network of youth development programmes has scouted talent from around the world, and is now being used to bring players into the Qatari league – and the national side.

In 2011, a team from the Aspire academy thrashed Manchester United Under-17s 5-1 in the Final of the Milk Cup, the annual international youth tournament held in Northern Ireland. Aspire's scorers that day were Ibrahima Drame (a hat-trick), Pabe Babacar and Souleymane Kone – who were all born in Senegal.

If – and, admittedly, it is still a big if – Qatar stage the 2022 World Cup, they could field a national side made up entirely of players born outside the Middle East.

Switch...Uruguayan striker Soria took Qatari citizenship

Dispatches

Exclusive reports from our worldwide network of correspondents

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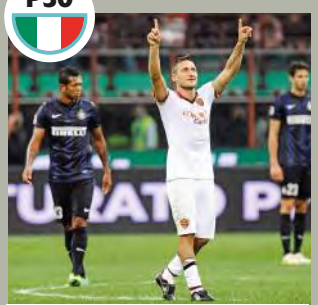

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Francesco Totti inspires Roma to seven wins out of seven as Serie A gets underway.

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BRAZIL
Could the end of the unpopular state championship finally be in sight for Brazil's top clubs?

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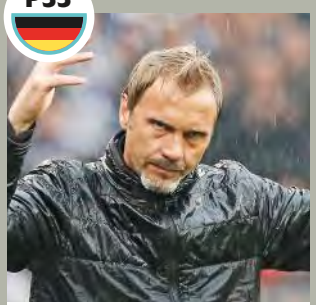

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Hamburg coach Thorsten Fink is an early-season casualty in the Bundesliga.

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The murder of three supporters casts a huge shadow over the domestic game.

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A lack of funding forces the Pacific Island's national side to rely on home-based players

PADDY AGNEW
in Rome

Giallorossi on a roll

Roma, inspired by Francesco Totti, won their first seven Serie A games of the season

Five months can be a long time in football. Last May, die-hard Roma fans were so disgusted by their side's 1-0 Italian Cup Final loss to city rivals Lazio that they travelled round the Rome ring road to the club's Trigoria training ground to shout abuse and throw various objects at the team bus as it returned from the Olympic Stadium.

In early October, more than 1,000 of those same supporters turned up at Rome's Fiumicino airport at 2.30am to salute their conquering heroes. That evening, Roma had drubbed Internazionale 3-0 at San Siro to record their seventh consecutive league win in seven outings and remain two points clear of Napoli at the top of Serie A.

The last time a team made such an impressive start to an Italian season was in 2005 when Juventus clocked up nine straight wins. That season, of course, ended with Juve winning the league but being subsequently stripped of the title because of the infamous "Calciopoli" match-fixing scandal.

To say Roma's dream start has taken everyone by surprise is a severe understatement. In early August, Rome sports daily *Corriere Dello Sport* asked some 50 experts – including Carlo Ancelotti, Roberto Mancini, Claudio Ranieri and Paolo Di Canio – to name the team that would give reigning champions Juventus most problems this season.

Of the 50, only Guido Angelozzi – Bari sports director and a former Catania player – named Roma as a possible threat. All the other 49 went for Milan, Napoli and Fiorentina, with some pundits even arguing that the only side that could beat Juventus this year were Juventus themselves.

Obviously these are early days, but the 3-0 win over Inter has convinced *Giallorossi* followers that this time it was for real. Prior to that, Roma had beaten Livorno, Verona, Parma, Lazio, Sampdoria and Bologna. Of those six wins, only one, the always fiercely contested derby against Lazio, had been seen as anything other than an expected three points.

> "If the World Cup were being played three weeks from now, I would call him up"
>
> Italy coach Cesare Prandelli on Totti

Overdue win

Roma had lost four of the previous five derbies, and drawn the other one, so a win this time was overdue, statistically speaking at least. On top of that, the derby is always a law unto itself which may not mean anything significant for the rest of the season.

For that reason, a whole battalion of sceptics had suspended judgment on Roma until such time as the side came up against one of the "big" sides, such as Inter.

Now coached by former Napoli boss Walter Mazzari and, like Roma, freed of the extra pressures of midweek European competition – they finished a miserable ninth last term – Inter went into the game on a high. Not only were they unbeaten, with four wins and two draws, but the two draws had come against Juventus and Fiorentina, no less.

The doubters got their answer at San Siro, however, with Roma having the game wrapped up by half-time and with Francesco Totti scoring the first two goals to take his all-time tally to 230 in Serie A, second only to Silvio Piola on 274. Totti also initiated the counter-attacking movement which led to Alessandro Florenzi's goal with a piece of pure, quick-thinking skill.

It is obviously not clear just how long this Roma run will last. But what is clear is that, as far as popular opinion is concerned, it has been dominated by three people: French coach Rudi Garcia, Totti and former Arsenal player Gervinho.

Object of mystery

Time will establish the full merits of Garcia, but for now he remains an object of mystery for many whose arrival this summer left a lot of Roma fans distinctly underwhelmed, given that his major claim to fame was winning the French league title with Lille. While results so far have done a lot of talking for him, the Frenchman has also endeared himself to fans and reporters with a series of pithy comments. For example, when asked about the derby on the eve of the match, he said: "You don't play derbies, you win them."

On the day after Roma had beaten Lazio 2-0 with goals from Federico Balzaretti and Adem Ljajic, Garcia showed that he has quickly learned a lot about football rivalry in the Eternal City when commenting: "Well, we've put the church back in the centre of the village."

Garcia has not only proved to be a quick learner, he has also moved with "political" sagacity, placing club icon Totti at the centre of his tactical plans. And in doing so he has reaped a much richer harvest than anyone would have dared imagine.

Likewise, his belief in Gervinho – who was a member of his Lille team – has paid dividends, with the Ivorian's pace annihilating every defence Roma have encountered so far. Arsenal fans would probably find it difficult to recognise the rejuvenated self-confident player who left them for €8million in August.

At 37 years of age, rather than fading out of the limelight, Totti is playing some of the best football of his career. Reports from Trigoria claim he has never been fitter, that he has never trained harder and that he is benefitting from a careful, fish-oriented diet.

Such reports prompt an intriguing question. Did the younger Totti, a bit like Diego Maradona, not bother to train properly and to look after himself because such was his enormous talent that it came too easily to him, fit or unfit? Or was his past training programme merely curtailed by the inevitable series of nagging injury problems?

If Totti stays fit, and if Roma keep on winning, don't bet against the veteran making a late run for a place in Italy's squad for Brazil next summer. WS

WHAT THE PAPERS SAY

La Gazzetta dello Sport
Tuttoilrosa della vita

"Totti-mania" is reaching epidemic proportions, with calls for national coach Cesare Prandelli to consider him for Italy's World Cup squad next summer.

Even if common sense argues against such an idea, it has not stopped media speculation, with *Gazzetta Dello Sport* asking five ex-Italy coaches – Azeglio Vicini, Dino Zoff, Marcello Lippi, Giovanni Trapattoni and Roberto Donadoni – if Totti should be considered.

All said that it would obviously depend on his physical condition next May, but none of them threw the idea out of court. Zoff said Totti can "do things no one else does", Trapattoni put him on the level of Mazzola and Rivera, Lippi called him "an ageless phenomenon", while Vicini said that "if Totti is willing, why not?"

One-club man...Totti, celebrating one of his two goals against Internazionale, has signed a two-year contract extension with Roma that will take him up to the age of 40

TIM VICKERY
in Rio de Janeiro

Common Sense breaks out

Is the end of the state championships in sight?

Something had to give. The organisation of the calendar is a major weak point of Brazilian football, cluttered by months of the obsolete state championships before the national league gets going, and forcing the big clubs into an excess of often meaningless fixtures.

The need for a pause for the Confederations Cup put an extra strain on this year, and a longer break to accommodate the World Cup makes next year even more problematic. In September the Brazilian FA (CBF) announced a calendar with the state championships starting on January 12 – an arrangement that would put the players in competitive action just four days after coming back from holiday.

The absurdity of this sparked a reaction and Bom Senso FC ("common sense") was born, an agglomeration of 75 players from all the leading clubs, most of them veterans, and spearheaded by Alex of Coritiba. The objective, says the midfielder, is "to present our ideas to those who control Brazilian football – TV Globo and the CBF – so that the position of the players can be heard.

"The idea behind our manifesto parts from the following consensus: the main competition that we have is the Brazilian championship and so this has to be seen as the most important".

This can only mean a reduction or a change of format in the state championships, but since these are crucial to the power structure of the game – the balance of power in the CBF lies not with the clubs but with the state federations, who jealously guard their local tournaments – a period of turbulence and conflict seems inevitable.

While all this was bubbling under, the excesses of the calendar were taking their toll on the Brazilian championship, with 20 rounds played in 11 weeks plus domestic and international cup matches.

Making a stand...Coritiba midfielder Alex (in white) has spoken out on behalf of the players

On paper Internacional have one of the strongest squads in the league, but it is a relatively old group and the side's slump cost coach Dunga his job at the start of October – the 20th coach in the course of the competition to be sacked.

Admission of guilt

Tite of Corinthians was not among the coaching casualties, despite coming under pressure when a poor run of results in September culminated in a disastrous 4-0 defeat by Portuguesa. Suddenly the reigning world club champions, seen as possible title contenders a few weeks previously, were looking anxiously over their shoulder at the relegation zone.

> "I apologise to everyone for anything wrong that I might have done. I'm not upset, I'm just frustrated that I was not able to give Internacional better results and more titles"
>
> Dunga after his dismissal by Internacional

Tite's team always stood out for their solidity rather than their shine. In winning the 2011 title, only four of the 21 victories were by more than a single-goal margin. And Paolo Guerrero's headed winners against Al Ahly and Chelsea in the World Club Cup were the only efforts on target the team managed in the competition.

The sale of Paulinho robbed them of vital goals, playmaker Renato Augusto was injured, expensive signing Alexandre Pato does not seem to fit happily into the 4-2-3-1 formation and other attacking components are ageing. The goals dried up and then the defensive unit started to creak. Tite appeared to steady the ship at the start of October, but qualifying for the Libertadores Cup will require a very strong run-in.

Indeed, the only side not to show such inconsistency have been runaway leaders Cruzeiro, who were 11 points clear with 12 games to go. Part of their secret is the depth of their attacking options, meaning that they are not dependent on the form and fitness of any one player. Their high tempo, aggressive football brought 58 goals in their first 26 games, while third-place Atletico Paranaense have 45 and no one else has hit the 40 mark. Yet despite scoring so frequently, Cruzeiro have no one remotely in contention to the tournament's golden boot.

Top marksman is Ederson of Atletico Paranaense with 15. Cruzeiro's leading scorer is Ricardo Goulart, a contender to be revelation of the season, with just eight. Central midfielder Nilton has seven, striker Borges has six and there are four players with five, plus recent acquisition Julio Baptista who has already weighed in with four. The goals have been shared around so much, with a substitutes' bench full of in-form alternatives, so the effects of the calendar have not proved so harmful. WS

NICK BIDWELL
in Munich

All over...Hamburg coach Fink seems resigned to his fate

Fink fired by fickle friend

Hamburg turn to Van Marwijk after another coaching change

What Hamburg would give for a time tunnel to enable them to return to active duty some of the men who made the club such a force in years gone by. For players of the calibre and character of Uwe Seeler, Willi Schulz, Manfred Kaltz, Kevin Keegan and Horst Hrubesch; for coaches as influential as Ernst Happel and Branko Zebec.

Without silverware since winning the German Cup in 1987, and with just two top-four Bundesliga finishes in the past decade, HSV have sadly become a byword for wrong turnings. Under successive regimes, casting errors at all levels, back-office power struggles, sloppy play and drained finances have become the norm – and this season they are again floundering, sacking coach Thorsten Fink after five league games.

In charge since October 2011, Fink could not have been surprised. Hamburg have a long track record for ravenously consuming coaches – 14 this century alone – and in the wake of two heavy defeats, a 6-2 thumping in Dortmund and 5-1 loss at home to Hoffenheim, something had to give.

For new Hamburg director of sport Oliver Kreuzer there was simply no alternative to firing his friend Fink. Sentiment is fine when the weather is clement, but with the Hamburg defence leaking like a colander, Fink constantly tinkering with his tactical system and reacting to the Dortmund debacle by immediately taking time off to be with his family in Munich, the point of no return had been crossed.

The taxing task of pulling Hamburg out of the relegation zone and restoring confidence and purpose now falls to ex-Holland national coach Bert Van Marwijk, the fourth Dutchman to call the shots at the club after Martin Jol, Huub Stevens and Ricardo Moniz. But on which Van Marwijk have Hamburg decided to spend €1.4million a year? The coach who led Feyenoord to UEFA Cup glory in 2002 and earned Holland a silver medal at the 2010 World Cup? Or the one who generally struggled during two-and-a-half seasons in the Bundesliga with Borussia Dortmund until 2006?

More than anything, Hamburg need stability, and Van Marwijk might well be the right man in the right place at the right time. The 61-year-old will not wilt in the highly-pressurised environment that is HSV, he has a good record for producing well-organised teams and is tactically astute. He gets his ideas across with conviction and clarity, and has no problem with a new-fangled idea or two; hence the personality and psychological tests to which he subjects his players.

But Van Marwijk will also need plenty of luck. For all the pre-season talk of European qualification, the harsh truth is Hamburg's squad is not strong enough. Apart from goalkeeper Rene Adler, Dutch playmaker Rafael Van der Vaart and left-wing-back Marcel Janssen, top talent is thin on the ground and there is little cash for reinforcements.

> "The team is very confused, it's not playing well and is letting in too many goals"
>
> New Hamburg coach Bert Van Marwijk

First coaching casualty

It says everything about the quick-draw nature of today's technical directors, chief executives and board members that Fink was not the first Bundesliga coach to be shown the door this term. That dubious honour goes to Bruno Labbadia, sacked by Stuttgart after just three weeks of the season.

His crime? Zero points from a possible nine, a certain dourness and a tendency to publicly criticise his players. In charge since 2010, Labbadia was just too stony faced and serious for his own good, a believer in discipline and work ethic who along the way lost sight of the creativity and spectacle of football.

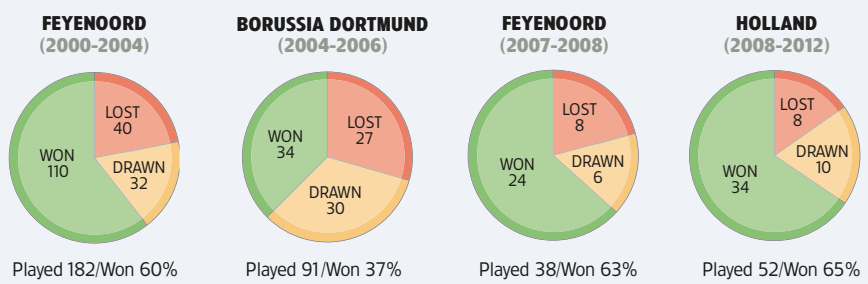
Nuremberg's Michael Wiesinger became the Bundesliga's third coaching casualty when he was dismissed after a 5-0 thrashing at home to Hamburg.

Over at Bayern Munich, cracks seem to be opening up in the peace, love and understanding of recent times, with arch-perfectionist director of sport Matthias Sammer reprimanded by president Uli Hoeness and chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge for suggesting a 2-0 win over Hanover was a comfort-zone affair lacking in emotion.

According to Hoeness and Rummenigge, the public airing of misgivings only served the interests of the opposition and the media. Club captain Philipp Lahm agreed, saying: "When someone of responsibility here feels they must criticise, it has to be done internally. When criticising one has to hold back on the emotion."

Back to the FC Hollywood days? WS

VAN MARWIJK'S RECORD AS A COACH



SID LOWE
in Madrid

Unbeaten Atletico throw down the gauntlet

Diego Simeone's side enjoy their best-ever start to a season

As La Liga temporarily shut down for the international break in October, two teams boasted perfect records after eight games. Barcelona and Madrid were out in front, and a gap of five points had opened up to the team in third place.

But while this might sound like business as usual in Spain, the Madrid club in question alongside Barca was Atletico, not Real.

Atletico beat Celta Vigo 2-1 at the Vicente Calderon in their last game before the break with a performance that delighted their coach, Diego Simeone, and meant the club had made its best-ever start to a season.

"[That] might be the best we have played since I have been in charge," said Simeone. "There were no ups and downs, it was continuous. We pressured, we were in their half and we created numerous chances."

Leading 1-0 at half-time, Atletico could have been five or six ahead had it not been for the visitors' goalkeeper, Yoel, who made eight big saves and stopped a penalty.

"The first-half was a 10 out of 10," said Atletico full-back Juanfran. And while there might have been a slight tail-off in the second-half, but no one could understand how it only finished 2-1; the shot count was 21-2. The following day, one newspaper headline called the game an "exhibition".

The week before Atletico had beaten Real 1-0 at the Santiago Bernabeu – just as they had done in the Final of the Spanish Cup last season. They had waited 14 years and 25 matches to beat their city rivals, winning for the first time this century, and now they had done it twice in four months. Atletico had also won twice in a row at the Bernabeu for the first time – the last time they won successive away derbies was back in 1921 when Real played on the east of the city.

No easy start

All of this has been very encouraging for Atletico – and it's not as though they had an easy start either, having played away to Real Sociedad, Sevilla and Real Madrid - all sides who have lost only once at home this season...to Atletico.

Simeone's side also won their first two Champions League games and only lost out in the season's curtain raiser, the Spanish Super Cup, on away goals after two draws with Barcelona.

Unbeaten in their first 12 games in all competitions, with 10 wins and two draws, the current team is, statistically, the best in the club's history. And this run of good form goes back further as, under Simeone, they have won the Europa League, Spanish Cup and UEFA Super Cup.

Success this season has been achieved despite the departure of Radamel Falcao to Monaco in the summer, with Diego Costa stepping up and scoring 10 times in those opening eight games, including the derby winner.

When Spain met up for international duty in October there were four Atletico players in the squad – and it would have been five if the Spanish Federation had managed to complete the paperwork in time to enable them to call on Costa, who was born in Brazil but has a Spanish passport.

While Costa is currently La Liga's top scorer, Atletico's 21-year-old midfielder Koke has provided more assists than anyone else. Thibaut Courtois, Juanfran, Arda Turan, Gabi, Mario Suarez are also playing superbly, but with Atletico it is not so much about the players themselves as about the team. The collective ideal is powerful and coming from Simeone it feels real, not just a platitude, when he talks of effort, solidarity and organisation.

In the build-up to the derby, Real coach Carlo Ancelotti talked admiringly about the work his opposite number has done. "Atletico Madrid play like Diego Simeone played: tough, focused, and tactically perfect," he said.

They are evolving too, becoming ever more expansive, rather than simply the counter-attacking side some assumed they were last season.

However, it is the mentality that most stands out. They are intelligent, mature – "the team interpreted this game very well," Simeone said after the derby win – and tough too. The turnaround since Simeone took over is incredible. With the

Derby tussle...Atletico Madrid match-winner Costa (left) and Real's Pepe

LA LIGA BUDGETS FOR 2013-14

How Atletico compare to the "big two"

> "Of the Spanish players in Atletico's starting XI, I think Gabi is the only one we haven't called up"
>
> Spain coach Vicente Del Bosque

Argentinian, who was captain of the club's 1996 double-winning side, Atletico found someone who could unite the disparate threads at the club, bringing players, fans, management and board together. There is a clarity about the club that was absent before. They now have an identity.

Atletico's entire mentality has changed. Gone is all the fatalism, the lingering sense that defeat is inevitable. There is a toughness and togetherness about them that was not there before. Defeating Real at the end of last season was symbolic; both cause and consequence of the shift in attitude. Defeating Real again at the start of this season proved it. The derby was no longer "Groundhog Day" and good results were no longer a false dawn. They used to call Atletico "*El Pupas*" (the jinxed one), but not any more. In the last three years, they have won more trophies than neighbours Real.

Big question

The big question now is, can Atletico win La Liga? On the morning after the Celta Vigo game, *Marca*'s front page declared: "The Candidate", with the sub-heading reading: "Atletico exhibit their credentials as a serious contender for the league." The Celta coach, Luis Enrique, insisted: "You would have to be naive to say that they are not a challenger." And the week before Ancelotti had insisted: "Yes, they can win the league."

Everyone seems to agree that Atletico can become champions – everyone except Simeone, that is.

Atletico's squad is smaller and their budget is less than a quarter of Real's, and Simeone continues to insist that the resources boasted by Real and Barcelona are too great. He claims that, over a full season, Atletico can't top the table – and he is probably right.

For the moment, Simeone insists on taking things game by game and his players are following suit. Ask them and they all say the same thing: one match at a time. But as game by game becomes win after win, it is natural that they should start to wonder.

"Of course we dream," says captain Gabi. "Even if we never say so." **WS**

MARK GLEESON
in Cape Town

Admin errors prove costly

Ineligible players cause havoc in World Cup qualifiers

Costly victory...Cape Verde Islands celebrate their win in Tunisia but they were later punished

It is a major irony that in the old days of pen and paper there was never such a slew of mistakes. Yet now, in the age of the computer, there has been an epidemic of record-keeping calamities which has served to make something of a mockery of Africa's 2014 World Cup qualifiers.

Failure to keep an accurate count of bookings and potential suspensions, plus the fielding of ineligible players, has characterised the campaign to determine which five teams from the continent will head to next year's finals.

Clerical errors cost the Cape Verde Islands a continuation of their rise to prominence and a place among the 10 nations left in the race for Brazil 2014, while mistakes almost proved just as damaging for Burkina Faso and Ethiopia.

On the other hand, the situation catapulted struggling Cameroon back into contention for another World Cup from a position of imminent failure, and also offered Zambia a helping hand that they ultimately spurned.

In all, half of the 10 qualifying groups were affected by FIFA overturning original results due to administrative clangers. The results of eight matches were negated due to the fielding of suspended or ineligible players.

FIFA have since said they will try to address the issue, but they will surely find the horse has long since bolted. Privately, officials at CAF feel FIFA is to blame because it did not adequately advise federations of the sanctions.

Admission of guilt

Ethiopia is the only federation to have candidly admitted its mistake so far, and the official directly responsible has been fired. And it is likely that the entire leadership would have walked had the mistake proven more expensive than it eventually did.

Ethiopia fielded midfielder Minyahil Teshome in their win in Botswana in June despite the fact that he was banned after picking up two cautions in the previous four qualifiers. The result was overturned and Ethiopia went from comfortably securing top place in the group with a game to go to suddenly opening the door for closest challengers South Africa.

The Ethiopian federation said officials "forgot" Minyahil was suspended and the country's football leadership promised they will not stand for re-election because of the error – although if they go on to qualify for Brazil that might be conveniently forgotten.

Needing to win their final game, away to Central African Republic – played on neutral territory in the Congo because of the security situation in Bangui – Ethiopia came from behind to go through 2-1 with Teshome, ironically, scoring the winner.

Tunisia had made sure of top place in Group B in June, but Cape Verde were handed a reprieve when they were later awarded three points from a loss in March to Equatorial Guinea. Former Spain Under-21 Emilio Nsue scored a hat-trick for the hosts but without the requisite FIFA permission for him to change his nationality.

Suddenly the Cape Verdians were afforded a renewed, outside chance and they seemingly clinched their place with a shock 2-0 win in Tunisia. However, it soon emerged that defender Fernando Varela should not have been playing as he still had one game to serve of a four-match ban and Tunisia were awarded the points.

Meanwhile, Cameroon had Togo to thank for playing Marseille midfielder Alaixys Romao when he should have sat out June's win in Lome.

Cameroon went from a two-point disadvantage to leading Libya by a point going into the final qualifier between the two in Yaounde. Libya, through no fault of their own, went from needing an away draw to requiring victory in hostile territory to advance – a task that proved too tough as Cameroon triumphed and topped Group I.

"This only happened with one continent, Africa, and others like Europe, Asia or South America did not experience the same problems where disciplinary action had to be taken," said FIFA's competitions director Mustapha Fahmy of the record-keeping errors.

"We have been saying we need to look into what happened." **WS**

> "We have noted with some concern what has happened with a number of teams falling foul to the rules of the competition, which are clearly spelt out"
>
> FIFA's competitions director Mustapha Fahmy

AFRICA'S FINAL WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

THIRD ROUND

Ivory Coast	v	Senegal
Ethiopia	v	Nigeria
Tunisia	v	Cameroon
Ghana	v	Egypt
Burkina Faso	v	Algeria

(first legs October 11-15, second legs November 15-19; winners qualify for the finals in Brazil)

JOHN DUERDEN
in Seoul

Guangzhou aim to conquer "Koreaphobia"

The Chinese powerhouse are favourites to beat Seoul and claim this season's Champions League

Reigning K-League champions Seoul will attempt to reaffirm the country's perceived superiority over their huge neighbour when coach Choi Yong-soo's side take on Guangzhou Evergrande in the Final of the AFC Champions League on October 26 and November 9, in South Korea and China respectively.

It was the Beijing media that coined the phrase "Koreaphobia" after decades of losing to South Korean sides. As a result, Koreans believe the Chinese mentality is a fragile one when it comes to football. But going into this year's Final, Seoul are seen as the underdogs – and that is because Guangzhou are not your usual Chinese side.

Led by Italy's 2006 World Cup-winning coach Marcello Lippi, Guangzhou have emerged as a real powerhouse in Asian football. Since their relegation to the Chinese second tier in 2010 after being found guilty of match fixing, the club, financed by a real-estate company, have spent more than US$70million on building a top-class team. Argentina star Dario Conca has been followed east by classy Brazilian midfielders Muriqui and Elkesen, and – having added most of China's national side as well – it is no surprise that Guangzhou, who won their third consecutive Chinese Super League title in October, only really get tested in continental competition these days.

Midfield drive...Guangzhou's Brazilian signing Muriqui

On our way...Seoul's Ha Dae-sung celebrates a goal with Kim Ju-young against Esteghlal in the semi-final

But even Champions League opposition has offered little resistance of late. Following a 6-1 quarter-final aggregate win over Lekhwiya of Qatar, an 8-1 thrashing of Japan's Kashiwa Reysol in the semi-finals was proof that Guangzhou can raise their game when necessary. So can Seoul prevent Lippi from becoming the first man to win the UEFA Champions League and its Asian equivalent?

> "We played an attacking game and moved the ball around well. Our dominance in the match just shows our potential"
> Guangzhou Evergrande coach Marcello Lippi after his side's semi-final victory

With Montenegro striker Dejan Damjanovic and cultured midfielder Ha Dae-sung leading the way, Seoul should certainly provide a tougher test. Like their Chinese counterparts, Choi Yong-soo's side are better going forward than defending and they will fancy their chances of getting among the goals.

East and west zones

Seoul beat Esteghlal of Iran to ensure an all-eastern affair in the Final, and these days the competition is divided into east and west zones for the group stage and second-round games.

Since 2005, Japan and South Korean sides have dominated, with Koreans winning three of the last four tournaments. While the overall standard of western representatives looked to have risen this year, the region lacked a real standout side, with only Al Shabab of Saudi Arabia genuinely impressing in the tournament.

Despite the east's superiority, the west still has a healthy proportion of the 32 places available in the competition. The fact that Qatar, with their sub-two million population, had four automatic spots this year, while south-east Asia – a football-mad region of 600 million people had one, has been a sore point.

While UEFA gives coefficient points to countries based on their teams' performances on the pitch, the AFC does so based on off-the-field criteria. In a massive continent wracked with bitter rivalries and history, the system is designed to be neutral and scientific but in practical terms it is misguided. This season just 10 of the confederation's 46 members were given automatic places, though after much wrangling – the established powers guard their allocation fiercely – there is due to be a very limited expansion.

This should go some way to helping the competition's profile. Asian fans are not always enamoured of their continent's football and when mention is made of the Champions League it is usually the European version being discussed.

Some countries, like China and Iran, get excited about their clubs while others such as Korea fail to do even that. And while their spending may not be universally admired, and has created a major imbalance in China's domestic league, a Guangzhou victory would bring a touch of glamour and a lot of attention to a tournament in need of both.

The club attracts 40,000 fans to most home games and is a 56,000 capacity sell-out for the big matches. Lippi, the stars and the money are big news both at home and abroad, and the Reds have the potential to become the first Asian superclub.

The continental title and an eye-catching performance at the Club World Cup would be major steps in that direction. WS

JAMES CORBETT
in Amman

Two games from World Cup debut

Jordan will face the fifth-best team in South America for a place at next summer's finals

It was the denouement of a World Cup qualifying campaign that had begun 26 months and 18 matches earlier with a 9-0 drubbing of Nepal in Amman. Now, only Uzbekistan stood between Jordan and a game against the fifth-best side in South America for a place at Brazil 2014. And the game against the Uzbeks had gone to penalties.

After a 1-1 draw in Amman, few gave Jordan a chance in the return in Tashkent. Indeed, a fifth-minute goal by Anzur Ismailov after a goalkeeping error suggested everything was going according to plan for Uzbekistan. But three minutes before half-time, Saeed Al Murjan struck a 30-yard volley that levelled the scores on the night and on aggregate. It was the one moment of genuine quality in what had been an untidy, scrappy match.

Extra-time came – and so too did a power cut before play resumed – followed by penalties. Uzbekistan missed their first spot-kick, handing the visitors the initiative. With the penalty scores tied at 2-2 and a nation watching, what promised to be the finest moment in Jordanian football history was wiped from the nation's TV screens as the satellite broadcast connection dropped.

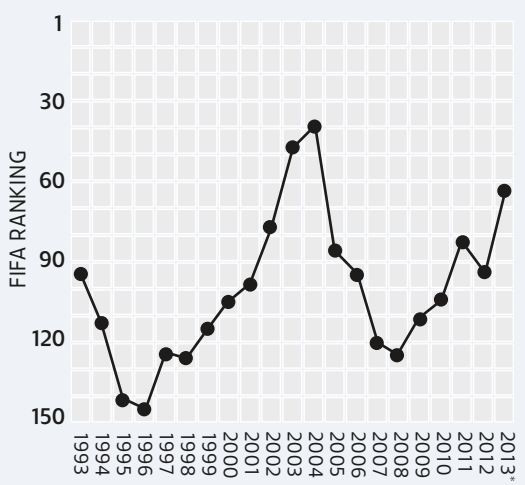
"The end of the match was already delayed by extra-time, a power cut and then penalties. Then everything stopped," explained Wael, an Amman-based supporter. "No TV, the mobile networks jammed, 3G dropped. Nobody knew what was going on. A radio station said we'd won 4-2, but then it was 4-4. It was chaos."

In Tashkent, Prince Ali Bin Hussein, head of the Jordanian FA and a FIFA vice-president who had followed his team throughout the long qualifying tournament, watched from the stands. He thought their chance had gone when, to the elation of the home crowd, Ahmad Ibrahim missed Jordan's fifth penalty, which would have won the match. Uzbekistan then equalised to take the spot-kicks to sudden death.

Nine more penalties were converted before goalscorer Ismailov's weak effort was saved by Jordan goalkeeper Amer Sabbah. A cavalcade of joyous Jordanian players piled on the hero of the moment as bereft Uzbeks in the Pakhtakor Stadium looked on in silence and disbelief.

"It was wonderful," said Prince Ali. "Wonderful for our country and region. We still have to face a South American team [in a two-legged play-off in November], but I think our boys can do it. We have the soul and spirit. We will try our best and I hope we make it to the World Cup."

JORDAN'S RE-EMERGENCE AT NATIONAL LEVEL



(* as of 16.10.13)

Slow-burn process

Jordan's rise to the brink of World Cup qualification under the Prince's leadership has been a slow-burn process. Despite reaching the quarter-finals at the 2011 Asian Cup, performances in previous World Cup qualifying tournaments gave little hint that Jordan would be in with a chance of going to Brazil next year.

Success in the 2014 qualifying campaign has been built on a formidable home record, with China, Japan and Australia all seen off 2-1 on the bumpy King Abdullah Stadium pitch in Amman.

The downside was their poor away record, which included a 6-0 defeat in Japan and a 4-0 drubbing in Australia. Jordan's Iraqi coach Adnan Hamad, despite taking the team to the Asian play-off, parted company with his employers at the end of the qualifying competition in June.

However, his replacement, the legendary Egypt striker Hossam Hassan, has instilled a defensive fortitude lacking in previous trips, and Uzbekistan rarely threatened in the play-offs.

Unbridled joy...Jordan's players celebrate their penalty shoot-out victory in Uzbekistan

Jordan's football success comes as the region is plunging into chaos. Syria is riven by a murderous civil war, while Lebanon teeters on the brink of conflagration. Although Jordan remains calm, the effects of the Syrian war have been hard felt. Jordan's trade with its neighbour has ground to a halt and up to 1,000 refugees flood into the country every day. Nearly 130,000 Syrians reside in Jordanian refugee camps, with hundreds of thousands more living elsewhere in the country.

Zaatari refugee camp in the north of the country has, in just 12 months, become Jordan's fourth-largest city. Here there are people who had dreams and lives, but who are now left with nothing except the hopes of an unlikely peace in their own country. It is a remarkable place of heat, dust and

Jordan boss Hossam Hassan's assistant coach is his twin brother, Ebrahim Hassan

Small comfort...a young Syrian refugee plays football

blinding light, with people living in tents and shacks. But despite the oppressive conditions, there is fortitude and resilience. More than 3,000 businesses – selling everything from bread to wedding dresses – have sprung up, with one entrepreneur even opening a swimming pool.

On a daily basis there is little to do and boredom, particularly among boys, is a challenge. However, under Prince Ali's chairmanship, the Asian Football Development Project has provided football pitches in the main camps.

"Football provides confidence, a sense of camaraderie, working as part of a team, and it also gives the sense of normalcy that people so desperately want," said Aoife McDonnell of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which administers Zaatari. "Some of these people came for three months and have now been here a year. Football, I suppose, can take your attention for a period of time.'

Non-governmental organisations speak glowingly of the installation of pitches, saying they provide the impetus for other social activities among refugees, for whom inertia is as often as big a challenge as hunger, shelter and trauma.

Prince Ali speaks of "activating football's conscience", but the response of wealthier associations to the crisis has been disappointing. The Norwegian government has donated €600,000 so far this year and UEFA has provided some footballs, but there has been little else. Ask about the huge transfer of wealth from the Gulf to clubs such as Manchester City and Paris Saint-Germain, or the £941million paid by Asian nations to watch the Premier League on television for the next three years, and the frustration at this disconnect is palpable.

"There is no limit to our needs," said Prince Ali. "It is not a donation we need, but I believe it should be a duty of every member association to help out.

"It has been a burden, but we always have open arms for those who need a safe environment and Jordan is a safe environment."

Back in Amman the journey of the country's footballers to the brink of the World Cup provides some comfort to a people who are acutely aware of their neighbours' suffering and have experienced their own challenges with the influx of refugees.

"These are difficult times, dark times even," confided Mahmoud, a waiter in one of Rainbow Street's restaurants in Amman. "We all know people who have been affected in one way or another. But our boys...they bring us hope. We believe." **WS**

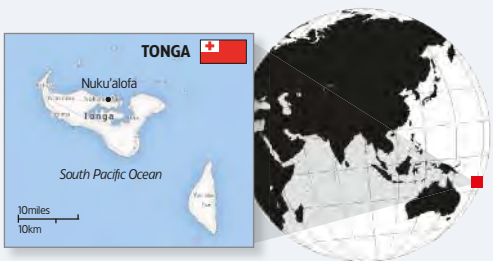
TONGA

STEVE MENARY

No money for home help

Tonga's national team must rely on players living on the Pacific island

WHERE IN THE WORLD?



Tonga is an archipelago in the South Pacific Ocean, halfway between Hawaii and New Zealand. It has the region's only monarchy.

Size 289 sq miles
Population 106,322
Capital Nuku'alofa
Language Tongan, English
Religion Christian

While American Samoa, the Cook Islands and Samoa were happy to bring in overseas-based players for the 2014 World Cup qualifiers in Oceania, Tonga relied solely on those at home. But it wasn't out of choice.

"We just didn't have the budget to find players of Tongan descent," says Chris Williams, the Australian who went to the remote Pacific island on an aid programme and ended up taking charge of the national team.

"At the first training session, some lads turned up without shoes and wore whatever clothes they had. Most of the players were unemployed. We persuaded the association to give us some money to help them come to training, but I had to go to the rugby league matches to make sure they weren't playing and getting injured!"

Both rugby codes are dominant sports in Tonga, and after union went professional in the 1990s some minority sports, such as cricket, briefly died out. But, with funding of US$250,000 a year from FIFA's financial-assistance programme, football survived.

Before the qualifiers for Brazil 2014, Tonga held a training camp at Mount Pleasant in New Zealand, where they were visited by one of the few Tongans to play abroad.

Kavakava Manumua kept goal for his country at the 2007 Pacific Games and later moved to New Zealand, working as a fruit picker while playing for local side Pukekohe. However, he has since drifted out of the game and was no longer deemed fit enough to play.

Another New Zealand-based Tongan, Sean Sullivan, was ignored completely. A holding midfielder for Ngaruawahia United, he had been invited for a trial in 2007 – after Seamus Marten, then director of competitions at the OFC, contacted the Tongans – but missed his chance due to injury and never heard from his homeland again.

Marten, now international teams' manager at New Zealand Football, says: "I had a passion for wanting to connect NZ-born Pacific Islanders with their roots. It was never in an official capacity. I just wanted PI teams to be able to field their strongest sides and help out mates."

Sullivan, who recently retired despite being only 26, admits: "I could not commit to Ngaruawahia as much as I would have liked due to being a father.

> "Sometimes the region doesn't help itself"
>
> Chris Williams, ex-coach of Tonga's national team

Football does not pay my bills. At that time I was offered a better job, with better money, so I took it."

Tonga beat the Cook Islands and drew with hosts Samoa in the qualifying campaign for Brazil, but went out after providing American Samoa with a first international victory. With no other games scheduled until the qualifying stage of the 2018 finals, Williams returned home.

Now coaching in Manly, he enjoyed his stay in Tonga and says: "There's potential for Tonga to fly to Fiji or wherever and organise an annual Polynesian Cup. The issue is budget – whether they've got it, I don't know." WS

Photo: Phototek

Home-grown...Tonga line up for an Olympic qualifier against New Zealand in March last year

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CARL WORSWICK
in Bogota

Murders cast shadow over the game

Three more fans killed just for wearing a club shirt

It is late Friday night and Pedro Contreras is sitting in his car shuffling through the radio stations. Nearby, the door of a local shop swings open and out walks Pedro's son, David. He is wearing the red home shirt of Santa Fe.

As he begins making his way towards the car, seven fans from rival club Millonarios spring from the shadows and block the 19-year-old's path.

Insults are traded, a scuffle breaks out and Pedro jumps from his car. It is dark and the eyes of the 66-year-old aren't what they used to be. He doesn't see the flash of steel whipped from the coat pocket of one of the Millonarios fans, and he is too slow to stop the knife's descent into his chest.

Twenty minutes later, the retired army sergeant is pronounced dead. He didn't even make it to hospital.

"I was attacked because I was wearing a red shirt," son David later mourned. "And now my dad lies in heaven."

Within 72 hours, two more Colombian football fans who were wearing the wrong colour shirt at the wrong time and in the wrong place were murdered. Carlos Medellin, 20, and Carlos Rodriguez, 21, were both killed for being Atletico Nacional fans on the eve of their team's *clasico* against Millonarios, the biggest rivalry in the league calendar.

The deaths sent Colombian football spinning into its worst crisis in years and left the whole country scrambling for answers.

Spectre of violence

The spectre of fan violence has haunted the Colombian game for years, but with 11 of the 32 football-related deaths recorded since 2007 having occurred during the last nine months, the problem is clearly getting worse.

Bogota's city council was the first to respond. As owners of the city's El Campin stadium – which is shared by Santa Fe and Millonarios – they called off Millonarios' game against Nacional set for that evening in a move that drew widespread public support.

> "This isn't an issue for football, but one for Colombian society; it is sick"
>
> Ramon Jesurun, president of the league organisers

"We cannot celebrate goals while our children are being killed over the colour of a football shirt," lamented Bogota council secretary Guillermo Alfonso Jaramillo.

But the postponement of one game was never going to be enough and, over the next few hours, Colombian football found itself under heavy attack.

"No more football until the game can behave itself!" screamed one enraged Twitter user, while the country's vice-president, Angelino Garzon, also used social media to point the finger at the murky relationship clubs enjoyed with the *barras bravas*.

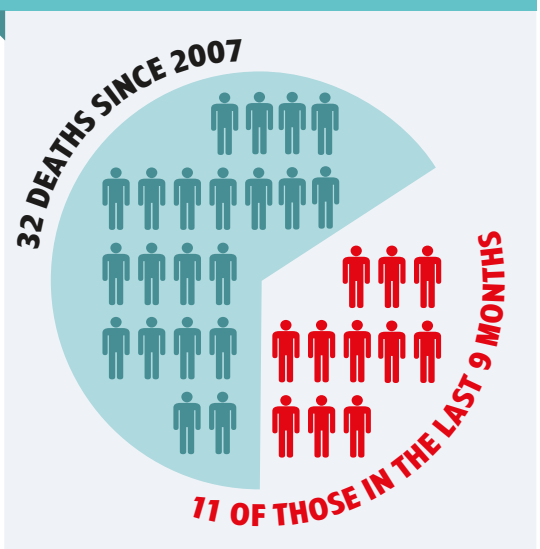
The maelstrom of blame being thrown at football forced the organising body of the domestic league to call a press conference and defend the sport's name. But a statement from the organisation's president, Ramon Jesurun, only served to wash the federation's hands of any responsibility connected to violence plaguing football. His strategy also served to tap into the mass wave of social unrest currently gripping the nation.

For weeks, protests from teachers, farmers, health workers and students swept across most of the country. The discontent had left government approval ratings at a record low.

Jesurun argued that football was merely a vacuum into which this frustration and alienation was being channelled. He won support from Colombian Football Federation president Luis Bedoya, who urged the country to expose "the real reasons behind the violence".

While Colombia's football authorities rushed to defend each other, on the other side of the fence stood government security advisor Francisco Lloreda. Supported by his

FOOTBALL-RELATED MURDERS IN COLOMBIA SINCE 2007



Time to mourn...relatives and flag-bearing Atletico National supporters gather round the coffin at the funeral of Carlos Medellin in Bogota

allies in the Conservative Party, he called for the national football championship to be axed.

Recent measures such as barring fans from away games and increased police numbers, had not worked. More drastic action, he claimed, was now needed.

Jesurun hit back, describing Lloreda's proposal as "absurd" and he won crucial backing from the country's president, Juan Manuel Santos, who ruled out the move.

Instead, the government announced a new monitoring system to be installed within all stadiums before the start of next season.

Spectators would simply swipe their national ID cards through machines at turnstiles and records would be kept of any acts of violence, including those of the *barras*.

Sensible measure

It sounded like a sensible measure and mayors across the country promised to throw their weight behind it – but it was soon revealed that the very same plan had been put into law in 2009 but had never been implemented.

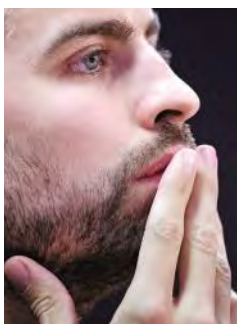
Furthermore, what good would an ID card have served the three latest victims, who were all killed on a non-match day at least 1km away from any stadium?

Colombia has been left shocked and disturbed that yet again a football shirt had been used as an excuse to kill. But in a country that has been engulfed in a bloody 50-year civil war, with laws left unenforced and much-needed self-reflection lost in squabbles over proportioning blame, it would be asking for a miracle to expect Colombian football to find solutions any time soon. WS

PLAYER Biography

Gerard Pique

The former Man United defender has been a key figure in the success of Barcelona and Spain in recent seasons. Exclusive interview by Sid Lowe



Gerard Pique sits proudly on top of the league. Not La Liga, but the football manager league he's in with the rest of the guys at work. Nothing unusual there, you might think. But Pique is not just playing and winning *Golden Manager*, he "invented" it.

He thought up the game, designed it and built the business model on which it is based, operating out of an office near the club's training ground.

Pique is not your average footballer, right down to the fact that he says he doesn't want to be a manager...but wouldn't mind being president one day.

Before that he will be captain. It is a role he is growing into, taking on increasing responsibility already. At 26, a father now, he is maturing into a leader. He is already a European champion and World Cup winner, has won over 50 caps, and has three Champions League winners' medals. A central figure for Spain and Barcelona – Tito Vilanova once said, "without Gerard, this invention falls apart" – he has worked with Alex Ferguson and Pep Guardiola, Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi. And Roy Keane. It's been an education.

He talks about it all with enthusiasm and clarity. At times, he falls about laughing; at others he thumps his hand into his palm to reinforce a point. There's a determination about him too, but he enjoys being challenged and his answers are nuanced rather than dogmatic. And there's a depth to them as well. The grandson of a former club board member, he recently celebrated 25 years as a *soci* at Barcelona. Few understand the club or the game better.

What are your first memories of Barcelona?

Snapshots in my mind: the European Cup in 1992, me calling Stoichkov "Stofiko", going to the Camp Nou every weekend. We had four seats in the main stand next to the directors' box, the *palco*: my dad and I, and two others, sometimes my mum, sometimes my grandfather, who ▸

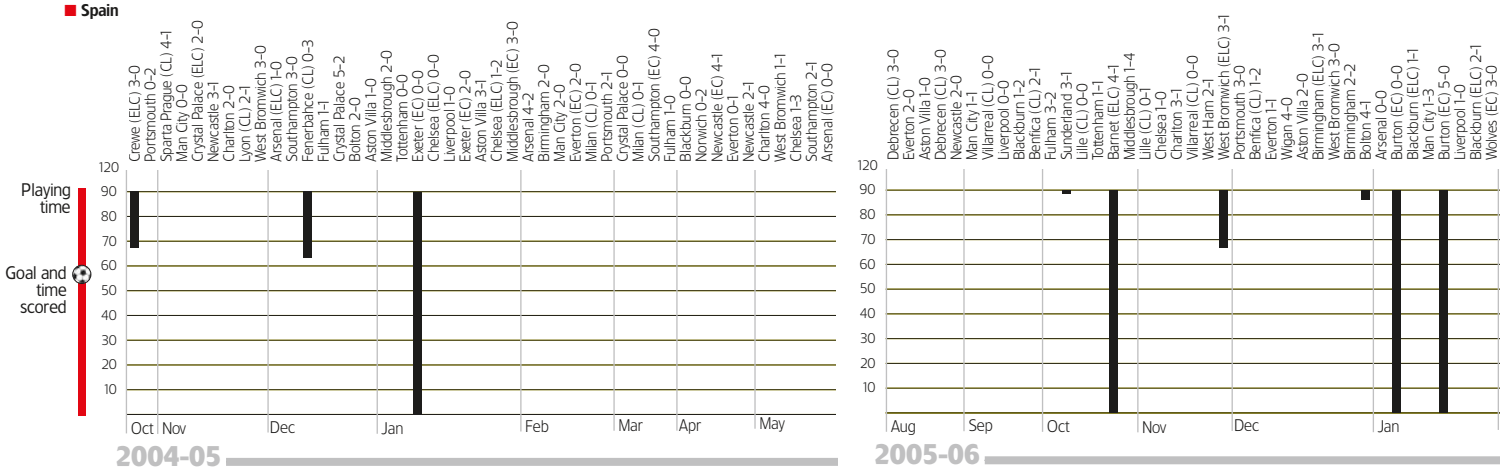
Group hug...Pique is in the thick of the celebrations after another Barcelona goal

TIMELINE: EVERY MATCH, EVERY MINUTE, EVERY GOAL

KEY

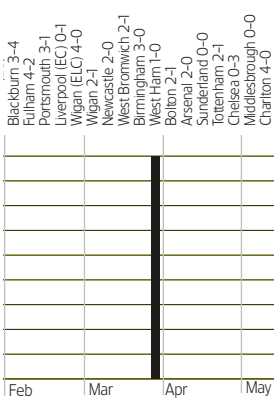
- Manchester United
- Real Zaragoza
- Barcelona
- Spain

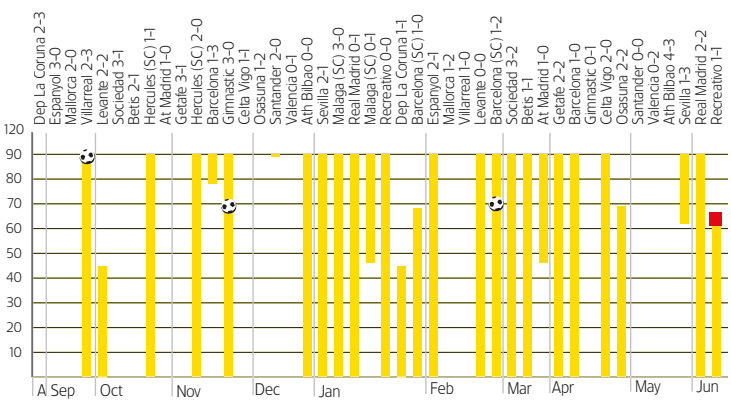
WCF	World Cup Finals	**CC**	Confederations Cup	**USC**	UEFA Super Cup	**ECS**	English Community Shield
WC	World Cup qualifier	**CWC**	Club World Cup	**EC**	English FA Cup	**SC**	Spanish Cup
ECF	Euro Championship Finals	**CL**	UEFA Champions League	**ELC**	English League Cup	**SSC**	Spanish Super Cup
ECQ	Euro Championship qualifier						



Feb 28, 2007 – impresses future employers Barcelona while on loan at Zaragoza, scoring in a 2-1 defeat.

Nov 7, 2007 – scores his first goal for Manchester United, against Dynamo Kiev at Old Trafford.





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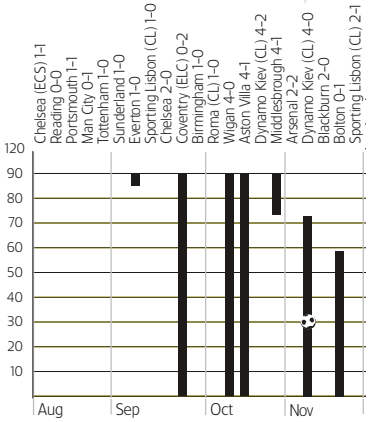


2007-08

FACT FILE

Gerard Pique i Bernabeu

Nationality
Spanish

Age 26 (02.02.87)

Place of birth
Barcelona, Spain

Height
6ft 4in (1.92m)

Position
Defender

Teams
Manchester United (2004-08) 23 games/2 goals
Real Zaragoza (2006-07) 28 games/3 goals
Barcelona (2008-present) 237 games/17 goals*
Spain (2009-present) 57 games/4 goals*

Honours
Manchester United
Premier League 2008

Barcelona
Club World Cup 2009, 2011; UEFA Super Cup 2009; Champions League 2009, 2011; Spanish Super Cup 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013; La Liga 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013; Spanish Cup 2009, 2012

Spain
World Cup 2010; Euro Championship 2012; UEFA U-19 Euro Championship 2006

(up to and inc 28.09.13)*

Photo: Offside Sports Photography

All-conquering...the 2002 Barcelona youth team with Pique (in the centre of the back row), Fabregas (back row, third from right) and Messi (front row, second from left)

was a board member at the time. Barcelona were everything to me: my *ilusion*. I was lucky. Because of my grandfather I met some of the players and imagined one day I could be one of them. My childhood was closely tied to Barcelona.

Who were your idols?
I became properly conscious a bit later on, so Romario, Ronaldo, Figo, Guardiola, Kluivert, Rivaldo. The worst moment for us was when Figo left for Real Madrid. That was really a terrible low for everyone: for the fans, for the club itself...

Have you ever spoken to Figo?
Not really. I said hello to him the day we played at Inter but it was just hello...

You didn't take the opportunity to say: "Oh, Luis, how could you..?"
Oh no! I imagine he must be a bit sick of people reminding him of it.

Is his departure something you have come to understand with time?
You come to understand it in the sense that you recognise that he's not a Catalan, he hasn't been brought up with Barcelona and he wanted what was best for him professionally. Here, at Barcelona, people loved him: he was captain, an emblem, the star of the team. His departure was very hard to take. A few days before he said he wasn't going to go. People talked about it as an act of treachery. I'm not sure if you can talk about it in those terms, but it was a real blow. But the club rose up again as it always does. One of the days I best remember, when I felt...not fear exactly, but a sense of "pfffff, wow"... was when he played at the Camp Nou for the first time as a Madrid player. People were very, very emotional, very wound up. They felt very hurt.

How well do you remember Barcelona's seminal moment: the 1992 European Cup Final?
I was only five and I remember very little, but I do remember listening on the radio. I remember '94 better. I was watching it with a friend of mine, my parents and his parents and we lost 4-0. It hurt, but at the time I was seven and I didn't fully appreciate just how big a European Cup Final was. You play and you might win or lose, but either way there'll be another one. Only there isn't. It's not until later that you realise just how big it is. It was only two years before but Barcelona had only ever won it once, at Wembley.

So when you won it in 2011, at Wembley, that must have been especially symbolic
Rome [in 2009] was very symbolic for me too. I'd arrived that same year, and from United, so to play for Barcelona in my first season and to play the Final against Sir Alex Ferguson had great meaning. But London was of course symbolic. It was also one of the best games I can remember at Barcelona.

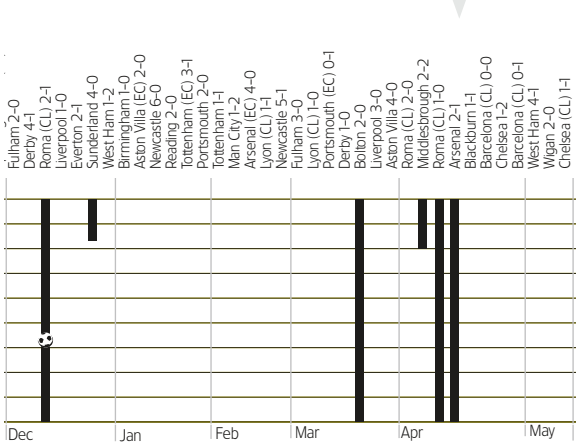
People talk about "*mes que un club*". Can Barcelona be understood without the socio-political or Catalan element?
If you consider it as only a football club it loses a lot of that intangible something that you don't see but that gives it meaning. Barcelona is very closely linked to Catalonia. I don't know the exact percentages, but Espanyol has few fans compared to Barcelona for example, so Barcelona almost is Catalonia. Catalonia

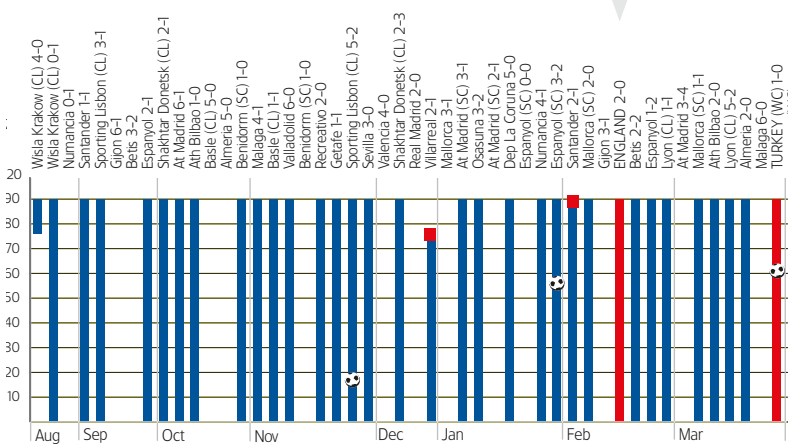
Tribute...for Ferguson after the 2011 Champions League Final win over Manchester United

KEY
- Manchester United
- Real Zaragoza
- Barcelona
- Spain

Apr 13, 2008 – his last game for Manchester United; he would join Barcelona at the end of the season.

Feb 11, 2009 – makes his international debut as Spain beat England in a friendly.





2008-09

historically has always been behind the capital, behind Madrid, and Barcelona, the club, has always been behind them too. In the last 10 or 15 years we're turning that round. But we're talking about a Madrid that has dominated football for 90 years, that has nine European Cups, that has won more Spanish leagues, more cups than anyone else. They've always been ahead of us.

And now...
In the last 10 or 15 years, a great generation has come from the youth system and helped us compete. Without this unique generation that would be impossible. Madrid go a year without titles and they spend €160million on three players: Illarramendi, Isco and Bale. Barcelona can't do that. We know we're different because we can compete with them without spending that money. Now, obviously, we can sign Neymar for €60-70m...but not three or four players. We're not a poor club by any means, but we are competing with the richest club of all. We've been able to compete with them recently and people get used to that but we have to realise that the reality is that there are all these people who've not cost a euro: Andres, Leo, Xavi, Victor, Puyi, Pedro. That's unique, that might not happen again. If you think about the starting XI at Madrid and you think of all the money they have spent, right down to Coentrao, and then you think about Barcelona's team, there's no comparison. The day we don't have the Masia it will be different.

> "The worst moment was when Luis Figo left for Real Madrid. He was our star...it was just so hard to take"

Happy families...with partner Shakira and baby son Milan at Camp Nou

Will that day arrive? Or is the work at the Masia good enough to keep bringing players through?
The work done at the Masia is very, very good. But we have to realise that some talent is innate and we have been lucky to have that recently. It's been worked on, of course, but however well you work you can have a period where the talent is just not there. The good thing about this club is that it has always believed in that so even when there have been years when good players have not come through, we've carried on. If you do that there is always a chance of people coming through.

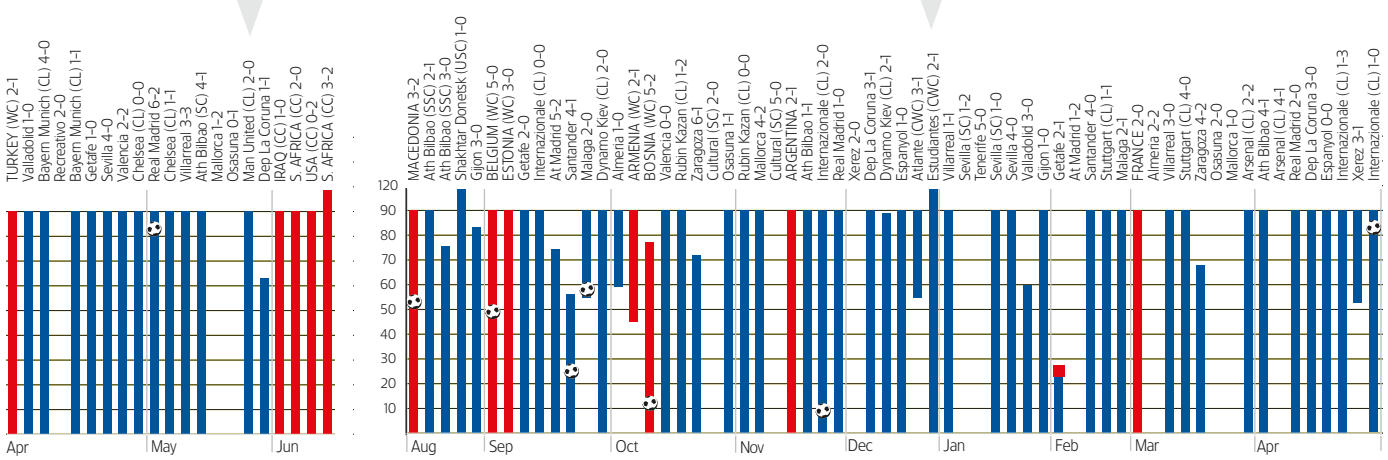
Your generation, the kids born in 1987, was particularly special: you, Cesc Fabregas, Lionel Messi...
And Marc Valiente and others too. The player who comes up through our system is perfect to play for Barcelona but then has problems going elsewhere. I think we are slaves of our style. If you're developing players to triumph at Barcelona, fantastic, because you adapt very well. But if you go elsewhere to a team that doesn't have the same identity, that doesn't like to have the ball, to play as we do, well then you have problems: a Barcelona player elsewhere suffers. The Madrid player is more individual, which is no bad thing. He can go elsewhere and adapt better to another team. If you look at top divisions, although the balance is changing, it is still true that there are much more former Madrid players at others clubs than former Barcelona ones. Players such as Esteban Granero, Roberto Soldado, Alvaro Negredo, Juan Mata...

Your team won every game and by huge scorelines. Was there a risk that it lacked competitiveness? And did that effect your development?
I had a childhood in which I enjoyed myself. I wasn't really seeking out greater competitiveness. The reality was what it was – except for Espanyol, which was the game of the year. We would play teams from the town next door and win 15-0. Competitiveness came in trying to score more goals. We trained five days a week from Monday to Friday and played on Saturday. Looking back, it's a sacrifice. It's not hard, but you're a kid and yet you do nine to five at school, you train six to eight, you go home, you do your homework for an hour, you eat, you go to bed. I didn't have time to go and play with mates, but I didn't see it as a sacrifice; I saw it as something to enjoy. And at the weekend you tried to score as many goals as possible.

Much is made of Barcelona's values. Do they really insist on that with young players?
I didn't live in the Masia so I don't have that experience, but all the players had to take their school grades in. They checked that you were studying, working hard, that you passed, got good grades. The timetables at the Masia were quite rigid too. In that sense Barcelona is the

May 30, 2009 – lifting the Champions League trophy after beating his old club in Rome.

Dec 19, 2009 – Barcelona win the Club World Cup in Abu Dhabi with a goal in extra-time.



Net profit...Pique makes sure he goes home with a souvenir from the 2011 Champions League Final at Wembley

number one. I was at home so it was different, but my parents had a similar attitude. Some kids had parents who were not as strict...

Your mum didn't want you to be a footballer...
It's not that she didn't want me to play, it's that she put studying above all else. My mum always said I was the perfect son. I don't think that's true: I suspect all mothers think that about their kids. But it is true that I got good grades. Mind you, it's also true that my behaviour was not the best - I think that's because I felt that I was so on top of it. I don't like the word *sobrado* [cocky] but I did feel in control. She made me work. I remember one day, during final exams, I was shattered because I had to go to training every day and I fell asleep. I got up at 5am to study. Studying is not so much about the subject itself – I couldn't tell you which subject I was going over at 5am – as about the culture of work and sacrifice, which my parents always insisted on.

Your mother is the director of the Institut Guttmann, the leading hospital for rehabilitation of patients with spinal cord injuries and neurological disability...
Yes, it's a different world, very tough. I always admired the fact that my mother never brought her work problems home, because I've been to the hospital and...pffffff...it's hard. You see people who are really suffering and yet my mum would come home and be a mother and be happy. Coming from where she came from, it could easily have left a mark.

Major influence... mother Montserrat

Can you leave the job behind?
Unless it's a game that's really, really bad, I digest the defeats. I'm pissed off but I get in the car, I go home and I try to disconnect. For example, the Bayern Munich defeat was very, very hard but even that has changed now having a child. I remember that day I was shattered, annoyed, and I went home and didn't want to talk to anyone. I got home, I saw Milan [his baby son] and then everything changes.

The story goes that your grandfather once introduced you to Louis Van Gaal as Barcelona's next centre-back and Van Gaal pushed you over and said: "He's too weak to play for Barcelona..."
It's true. I would be 13, 14, bloody hell! He came to my grandfather's house and, shit, it's the coach of Barcelona and I want to impress him. I was thinking: "In three or four years I want to play." And, he pushed me and I was liquidated! I didn't say a single word during the entire meal! He pushed me right over. I was lying on the floor and everything.

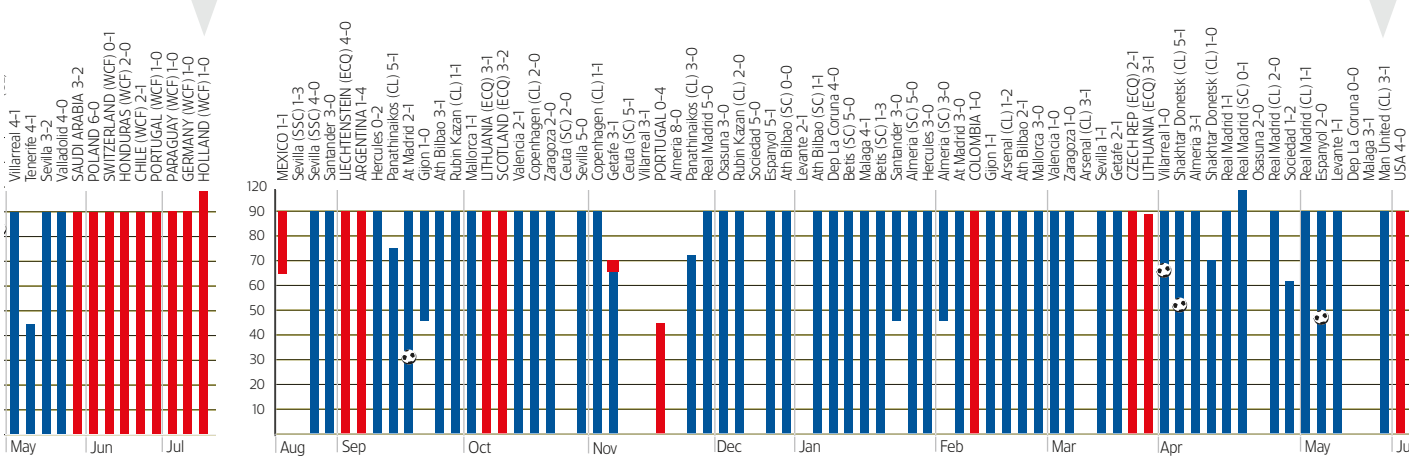
Van Gaal was frightening?
People have told me he was a very straight person, very honest, and a good guy, but the first impression? Wow!

So did the move to England give you what he thought you were lacking? Without it would you have been tough enough to make it?
English football is very different: more direct, faster, more physical. For the fans, it may well be more entertaining. I can buy that idea. When I went there I was tall but I was very skinny. I had to work on my physique a lot. One of the things that we didn't do at Barcelona was weight training at 15 or 16.

KEY
- Manchester United
- Real Zaragoza
- Barcelona
- Spain

Jul 11, 2010 – helps Spain win the World Cup for the first time in their history.

May 28, 2011 – another Champions League Final success against his old club – this time at Wembley.



Should you have?
I don't know, that's a question for the experts. I don't know to what extent you can do weight training when you're very young. Maybe you don't grow as much. But I did very little in that last year before going to United. To some extent, between 16 and 18, you fill out anyway, but in England I started real weight training. You also start to get your body more accustomed to a physical game, to contact. You do a series of exercises that I had never done before: weights, press-ups, abdominal work, cardio-vascular exercises. That really helped me.

And mentally?
I'd lived in Barcelona in a bubble. If you don't leave home, you always have that parental protection: food on the table at 9pm, your clothes washed. At United they do it for you too but you have to take the initiative. You mature. I left a kid and came back an adult. The first months were hard. You feel alone, and although I spoke English I struggled to express myself. Later on it's hard for different reasons. At 20, 21 you've changed your whole life in exchange for an opportunity. You leave your friends and family behind and you do it to play, but then you're not playing. Rio and Vidic were playing spectacularly well and Ferguson didn't give me the games I'd have liked. That's when you're at home, it's the middle of the day, you've trained but you're not playing, it's 4pm and it's going grey outside. You feel like the ceiling is coming in on you. Those hard moments mean you enjoy the good times more.

Was Roy Keane frightening?
Yes, very frightening! One time he was sitting there in the dressing room before a game and my trousers were hanging from the peg just above his head and my mobile went off. It didn't make any noise, it just vibrated...and he went mad. "What the fuck!" Shouting and screaming. Terrifying!

Team-mates now rivals...Ronaldo (left) and Pique at Manchester United

Was it necessary, though? Does every dressing room need someone like that?
I don't know, it was just the way it was: you turn up in the United dressing room and he was there. At Barcelona we don't really have someone like that and I don't think things have gone badly for us. It's a different culture. Roy was there, I don't know how it would have been if he hadn't been there. You learn. It was a crash course in professional football. Barcelona and United are similar in that they are two big clubs that have to win always. But at United it was more closeted. Players like not being so exposed. Here in Spain, there are four sports newspapers daily that have to fill 20 or 30 pages.

What was the story about your satellite dish that kept going missing?
Not the dish, the antenna. That was the first year when I was renting a flat. The telly wasn't working and my dad, who was visiting, had a look and said: "Yeah, it doesn't work because the antenna's not there." So we put another one up, and the same thing happened, again and again. By the third time we realised there was a rule in the building that you couldn't put the antenna up. Then there was a kind of van outside and they said you have to pay for a television licence. In Spain no one has to pay that. But this? One of the strangest licences I had seen in my life. I was thinking, you have to pay to have a television? Eh?

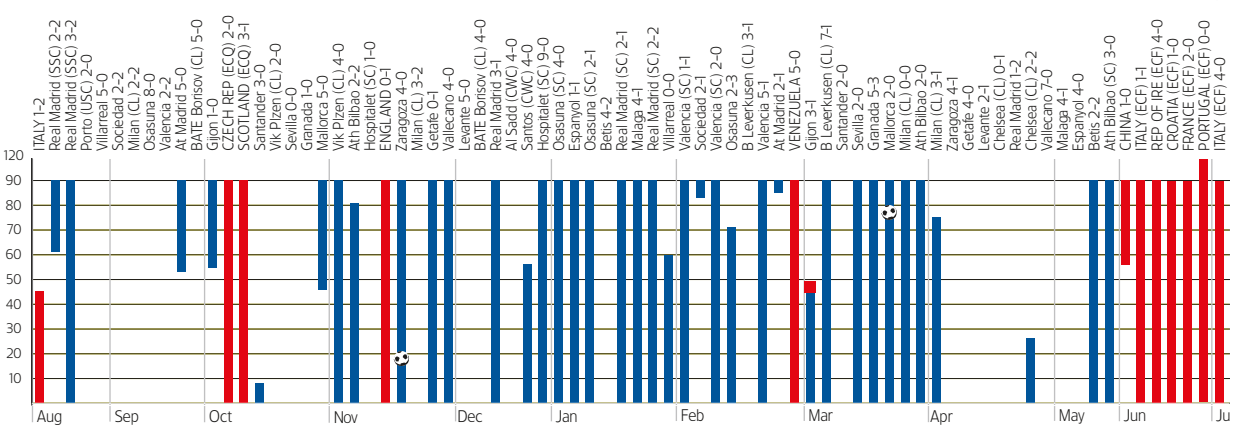
On stage...duet with Shakira during the Colombian singer's concert in Barcelona

You were team-mates with Cristiano Ronaldo. Has he changed?
No. He's the same. He's a player I have always admired because he's a worker who always wants more and more and more. He is a machine, he's so ambitious. He's naturally very strong but he never, ever stops fighting to improve. He's in the top two or three in the world. Some say he is the best, yet he still wants to improve. I admire him because of that. I also think that the rivalry with Leo has helped him keep improving too.

Presumably players have a very different take on the Madrid-Barca rivalry than fans do?
Yes. But it's also true that it's hard not to be influenced by everything that goes on around you. However much you try not to read the press, you put the telly on and they're talking about football. There are some programmes in which people who are coherent and rational discuss things, but there are fewer and fewer of those every day. Instead there are shows that are based on *Salsa Rosa* [celebrity gossip TV] in which everyone says whatever they bloody well feel like. It's all controversy and confrontation. "This guy hates him, and he hates him, and he's going to kill him, and they fight..." And it's impossible

Dec 18, 2011 – battling with Neymar of Santos in the Club World Cup Final in Japan.

Jul 1, 2012 – Spain retain the European Championship they won four years earlier.



2011-12

to remain totally untouched by that. The media agenda, the noise, changes the environment and can influence you, encouraging you to think: "Bloody hell, those Madrid players are bastards" or whatever. But in the end, they're professionals like us. There's a very powerful rivalry with Madrid but for much of our histories it has been a healthy rivalry. It's true that at times there have been external factors, or even internal ones, that have tried to make rivalry more intense than is really necessary, or take football beyond the pitch.

There was a moment, particularly after that run of four *clasicos* in 18 days in 2011, when it seemed that the rivalry between Madrid and Barcelona would damage the national team. Were you genuinely worried about the impact of that?
There was a moment, yes. I'm not sure if "critical" is the word, but it was a moment where if we hadn't taken the step we took it might have been a real problem. We're fortunate the Spain squad has people who are mature and who saw it needed resolving, that we needed to speak.

What happened?
One day we all sat down and we started to talk about it and we reached the conclusion that it would be impossible for us all to agree on everything because we all have our way of seeing things and the truth is not black and white, but that we had to realise that those differences didn't matter as much as what we shared. We all realised that, look, we're in the Spain team together, we have to be united...and so we won Euro 2012 together.

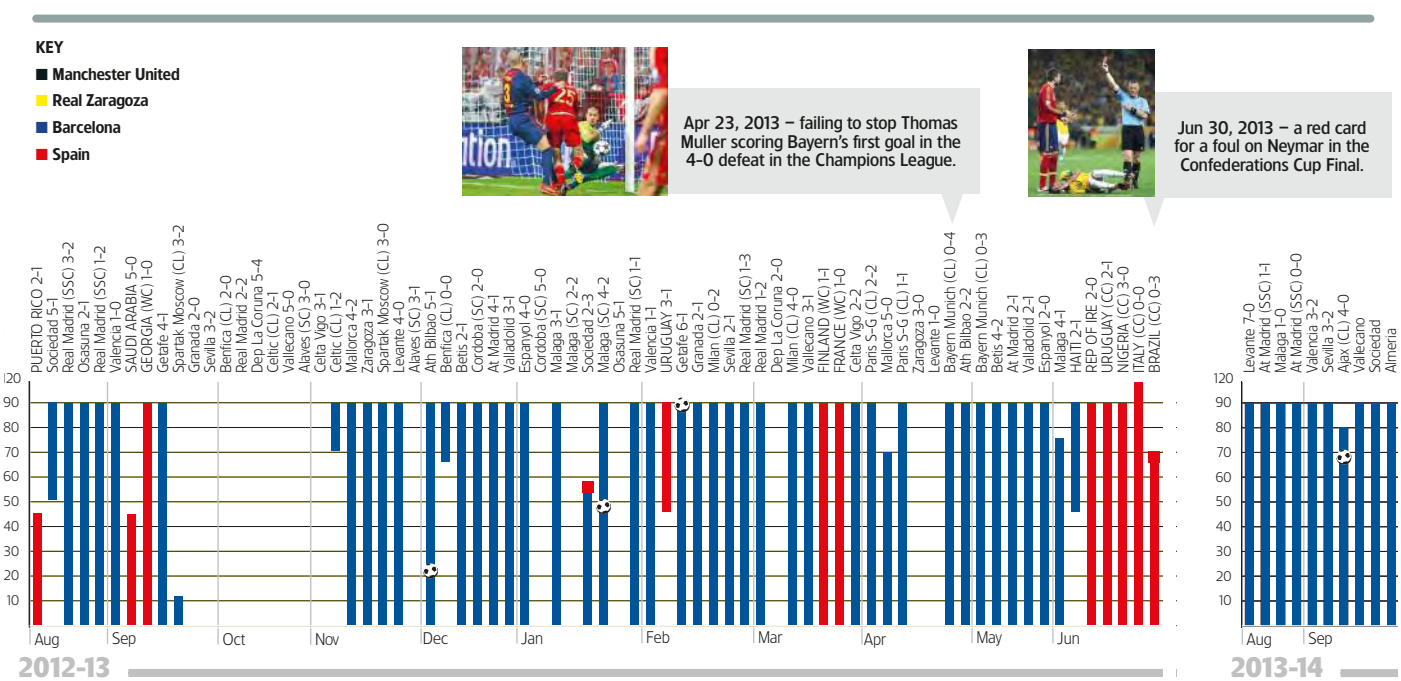
Sergio Ramos says you and he may not go out for a beer together but you understand each other and can still work together...
That happens in all businesses; the difference is that in football everyone is talking about it. If you look around your office there will be people closer to you than others. That happens in the national team and at Barcelona too. We have a very good dressing room but there are people in there who are not friends. We're human beings.

Mentor...Pique says Guardiola is the best coach he ever had

You also won the World Cup of course. And you took a very special souvenir from South Africa...
Yes, the goal net! We were fighting the guy in the stadium to get it. It's a basketball tradition. I take the whole thing normally, although at the World Cup they only let me take a piece. I frame it and I cut it up a bit and give pieces to people. It's nice. Not for now but maybe in a few years' time I'll look back and enjoy it.

Let's go back to your return to Barcelona after United. Had everything changed or was it the same Pique and the same Barcelona?
I valued everything much more when I came back. At 15, 16, I would go out and have a bite to eat, or eat with the family, and it was just what happened. When I came back, I really appreciated that. On a football level, I arrived at a time when few people really trusted in us. We came off the back of two years in which they had not won anything, Deco and Ronaldinho left, Guardiola had just come from Barcelona B, there were doubts. On top of that we didn't start well. But then we beat Sporting 6-1 and went on an incredible run, we were like motorbikes. The pre-season was very good and I have always said that Pep is by far the best coach I have had.

Why?
The main thing is that coaches will tell you to do this or do that but he would tell you why, so you understand the game better, you learn. He analyses opponents better than anyone. He spends 24 hours a day watching videos. He gets you the Friday before the game and he says: "Look, this lot attack like this, or this, or this...we have to tilt the defence to the right, or the left, and then attack them this way." And he's the best at that. When you go into the game knowing how they are going to attack, you grow in confidence and you become a better player because of it. A player is a better player when he has confidence, when he knows. Also, with Pep we had an identity: we'll play like this in Granada, in Malaga on a pitch full of puddles, everywhere. There are lots of people from the Masia so they understand football the same way. The other thing is to really believe in what you do. That team really believed in Pep and he believed in his ideas.



Was it easier for Guardiola because he had been so important as a player?
I don't think so. There were lots of doubts, polls showed that people didn't think he was the right man. But Guardiola has a very strong character in that if he believes in something he goes for it and he never wavered. And he spoke so well in press conferences and, even if you're not really conscious of that, that transmits belief which gives you security.

His most famous press conference was the "*puto amo*" one where he went for Jose Mourinho. He seemed to have lost the plot, but it worked...
The team was very hurt after the Cup Final and I remember he told us that he would take us to the Final of the Champions League. He felt very comfortable being the protagonist. He was happy to be the leader and didn't want anyone above him. He went out there and stood up for the team, a real leader. After the Cup Final maybe people didn't trust us, there were external factors against us, it seemed like Madrid were the great Madrid again, that Jose Mourinho had found the way to stop us...he felt that he needed a *golpe de efecto* [to make an impact] and he did it.

> "We're the only team in the world who could have won the league with everything that happened to us"

Barcelona won the Champions League semi-final first leg 2-0 at the Bernabeu...
I remember a semi-final when they beat us in 2002 and it hurt. That night [in 2011] was a kind of revenge, a chance to level up the score historically. Beating Madrid is always different. We've always been a bit inferior, even when we weren't really inferior, because of everything: they're in the capital, they're stronger, we're always behind...it was like that for years. We always played well but we never won anything. But this is a generation that has competed with them and won.

You competed. Do we sometimes forget that essential competitive element with Barcelona?
The most important thing is to compete. There are lots of teams with huge amounts of talent that have never won anything. You have to have desire, hunger. I'm convinced that 90 per cent of a player is confidence and hunger, and 10 per cent is talent.

Did that hunger slip away last season with everything that happened?
It winds me up a lot when I read, for example, the things that Xavi had said which to some extent were misinterpreted, that we had not worked hard on the physical or tactical side of the game. You do not win a league against a Madrid side that has spent I don't know how many millions on players since 2002 and by 15 points, racking up 100 points, if you do not work. That's for starters. You just don't. Last year we got a bit dusty and we needed someone to wipe us clean a bit, to polish us up, and I think Tata [coach Gerardo Martino] is doing that. But I think we're the only team in the world that could have won the league last year with everything that happened to us. A team without its coach, a player that suffers the same illness. We win the league and it's treated like it's...not mediocre exactly but a bit "well, whatever". Bayern Munich, they say, but last season was the absolute business! And with all that happened too! Then they say we don't work, that Jordi Roura isn't good enough...don't be bloody stupid! People don't value what we did, they don't. We are a very good team and we have won a lot and there are generations that have not seen Barcelona win ever, people like my father. But we've now gone 10 years winning things. People have got too used to the good times.

Tito Villanova's illness must have been very hard...
Very, very hard. The problem is that a footballer is not treated like a normal person. He has to always play well. But we're human, we're people: we might have family problems, illnesses, friends in jail...whatever. Just like other people. It's true that because of what we earn, which is huge compared to people especially now with the crisis, the demands are rightly different. But the demands are enormous. We try to do our best every weekend but we're not machines. Tito's illness, Eric [Abidal]. Is there any physical effect? No, probably not. Is there any tactical impact? Probably not. But there is something intangible that affects people. Of course it affects us.

King of Europe...lifting the trophy after Spain beat Italy in Euro 2012 Final

Is there an extra layer of pressure for you because of Shakira [the Colombian singer who has been his partner for three years]?
In my case, it's a bit special because of her. You change some things: you don't go to shopping centres, you don't go to places where there are lots of people. I can take a stroll or go to a park and people understand you're with the little one. But you don't go somewhere there are crowds and you can't control it. But it's a balance: maybe you lose one side of the scales but on the other you have a family who love you, you play for Barcelona, what more can you ask? You've got what everyone would love to have.

You've said you wouldn't want to be a manager but you'd like to be president. If you were voted in now what's the first thing you'd do?
I might change my mind, I'm only 26, but yeah I'd love to be president. But right now there's a president who's Sandro [Rosell] and I'm not about to tell him what to do.

Why do Barcelona always seem to have problems with the *entorno*? These internal battles seem to be constant, there's always different factions...
That's one of the few "small club" things we still have. I know some *cules* [Barca fans] will say: "No, no, Barcelona has always been huge!" But for many years Barcelona winning the league was rare. There was talk of injustices, Madrid's power, the capital, etc, etc...but then there is a period from the Dream Team through Van Gaal, Rijkaard, Pep, Tito, to now in which we have won and played brilliantly. Barcelona is still more than a club, but now we win too and that changes mentality and identity. We're a bigger club. But some things don't seem to change and the *entorno* is one of them, a hangover from being a small club. It can never be good for a club to be divided. Of course there's been Guardiola, Cruyff, important figures, people who've done so much to make this club great, but you can't just support one person. If you are a *cule* you have to support FC Barcelona. At Madrid they support the man in place and they support him to the death. In Barcelona, our culture is different. That's a small club thing. I hope with time we will realise we have to all move forward together. Some of the other issues we've had have been overcome by success, but that remains. WS

Philosophy versus money

Jonathan Wilson tackles the age-old question: can success be bought?

Madrid mega-stars...but world record signing Bale (centre) and the previous incumbent, Ronaldo, will have to prove that they can gel at the Bernabeu for Real

There are, to put it in its broadest terms, two ways to create a team: you either buy a lot of good players then work out a way to get them to play together, or you develop a philosophy and gather players who suit that style of play. The former is perhaps more glamorous – all-star players, enormous sums and grand unveilings – while the latter tends to produce greater long-term success.

Most teams, of course, fall between the two extremes, but it could be argued that since systematised football took hold in the early 1970s, all the truly great sides – the Ajax of Rinus Michels and Stefan Kovacs, the Bayern Munich of Udo Lattek and Dettmar Cramer, the Liverpool of Bob Paisley, the Milan of Arrigo Sacchi, the Barcelona of Pep Guardiola – were based on a philosophy rather than on enormous signings.

Which is what makes the present situation so intriguing. The two dominant teams in European football over the past five years or so have been Barcelona and Bayern Munich, both who practise variants of the possession-based, hard-pressing game characteristic of "Total Football" and who have, of late at least, tried to develop their own talent.

There have been big signings – although at Barca, in particular, they have often struggled to adapt to the system – but in both cases the team unit has been key. The absurd talents of Lionel Messi disguise the point, but at Bayern it is clear enough: it's very difficult to say who their best player was last season. Many would nominate Franck Ribery, but decent cases can be made for Arjen Robben, Toni Kroos, Javi Martinez, Thomas Muller and Philipp Lahm – and you could probably have added Bastian Schweinsteiger to that list if not for such an injury-disrupted year.

> The huge sums spent on players may be a gamble but, tactically, it seems money breeds conservatism

Yet, at the same time, the rest of the football world seems obsessed by transfers. The nouveaux riches of Monaco and Paris Saint-Germain have bought Radamel Falcao and Edinson Cavani respectively – as much to make the point that they can as because they are players they particularly need or who are ideally suited to the way they play.

Chelsea splurged on attacking midfielders so, having loaned out Victor Moses, they now have Juan Mata, Oscar, Eden Hazard, Kevin De Bruyne, Willian and Andre Schurrle competing for three spots – with Jose Mourinho quite happy to play Ramires in the wide-right role as a defensive measure, as he did at Tottenham Hotspur in September. Wayne Rooney would only have added

to the congestion had he been signed – assuming Chelsea's pursuit was genuine and not part of a campaign to destabilise the new Manchester United manager David Moyes.

World record

Most eye-catchingly, Real Madrid, hurting after defeat in last term's Champions League semi-final and a league campaign that was over before Christmas, broke the world transfer record to sign Gareth Bale. With Isco joining as well, they are overburdened with creative midfielders – with no sign so far that Bale and Cristiano Ronaldo will be able to play effectively in the same side. It could even be argued Barcelona landing Neymar a year earlier than originally intended was a classic case of a club seeking solace for a disappointing season in a big-name buy.

Such is the demand for signings – even if they are there more to satisfy the news cycle than because they are needed – that Arsenal are almost derided for making a profit, while at least a part of the dissatisfaction hanging over Old Trafford at the moment is the bluster of a transfer window that ended up yielding only Marouane Fellaini – even though he seems to answer the most pressing flaw in the squad.

The result of all this is twofold. One is a sense of tactical stagnation. Sacchi said that after his Milan there was no evolution until Guardiola's Barcelona. They offered a glimpse of an extraordinary future – one Guardiola may yet deliver at Bayern – but that door now seems to have closed. Among the wealthiest clubs, tactics – to use Sacchi's term – have become "reactive", more about plugging gaps than creating a system that has a multiplicatory effect on the talents of those within it.

The second is an unexpected process of recalibration. While the general trend is for success to follow the money, the impatience of wealth and the desire for more and more shiny new players places a check on such clubs. It thus offers a chance for the tier below, the likes of Borussia Dortmund and perhaps Liverpool and Arsenal, who do have a clearly defined style of play and are only too happy to pick up the players discarded or overlooked by the big boys.

Better off

Gabon and Armenia internationals may not sell shirts in vast quantities, but Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Henrikh Mkhitaryan have both slotted in seamlessly at Dortmund. Daniel Sturridge has blossomed since joining Liverpool – which hopefully will persuade other young players they are better off playing for a top-six club than sitting on the bench at a top-three club – while Mesut Ozil's reluctant move from the Bernabeu to Arsenal prompted glee in north London matched only by bewilderment and anger from players and fans in Madrid.

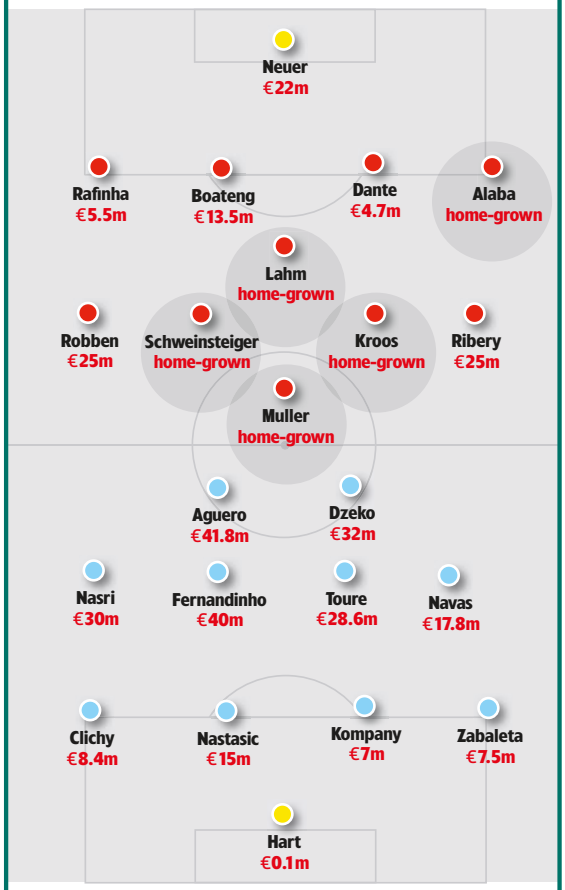
Tottenham, meanwhile, have used the Bale money to strengthen their squad in both senses, giving them both more cover and more physically imposing players – a sort of footballing version of trickle-down theory.

The huge sums spent on players may be a gamble but, tactically, it seems that money breeds conservatism. In the era of the super-club, it is those sides who have faith and patience in a philosophy who offer hope that football will not simply be the preserve of sheikhs and oligarchs, and it can still be decided on the pitch rather than the balance sheet. WS

Promising...summer signings Aubameyang (left) and Mkhitaryan have slotted in nicely at Borussia Dortmund

MANCHESTER CITY 1 v 3 BAYERN MUNICH
CHAMPIONS LEAGUE, GROUP D, 02.10.13

Five home-grown players Total cost €95.7m



No home-grown players Total cost €228.2m

Filling a need...Fellaini

ClubFocus

MONACO

Kings of bling

Investment from Russian billionaire Dmitry Rybolovlev has revived the Monte Carlo club – but not everybody in France is happy with their success. Howard Johnson reports

One of Bob Monkhouse's best jokes went something like this: "They all laughed when I said I was going to be a comedian. They're not laughing now." So if people thought it was nothing more than a hilarious gag when the super-rich Russian, Dmitry Rybolovlev, coughed up for a 66.6 per cent stake in Monaco in December 2011, it's safe to say they're not quite as amused now.

When Rybolovlev put his money where his mouth was, once great Monaco were bottom of the French second division and the laughing stock of the country's footballing community.

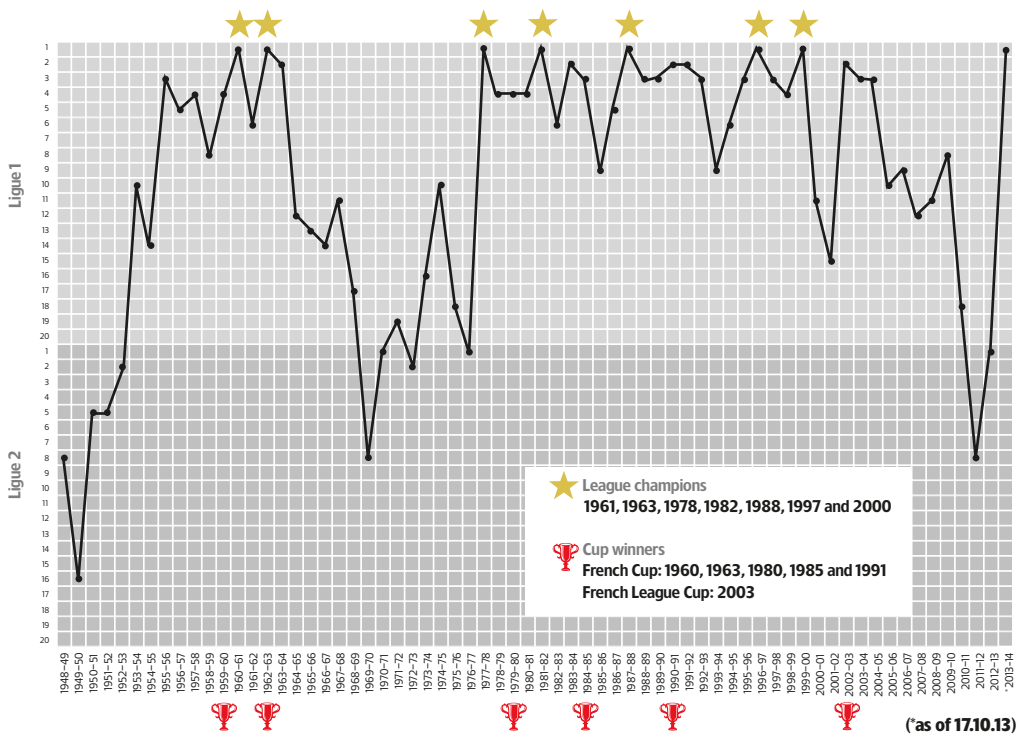
The high-profile, big-money purchase of Paris Saint-Germain by the Qatari Sports Investment group in May of the same year had captured the headlines, both sporting and fiscal, and only served to highlight the disaster that had become of the Principality club.

The general reaction was, "Monaco? Come back and see us if ever you're back in the top flight and ready to play with the big boys."

Rybolovlev is not used to such a brush-off. After all, the 46-year-old features in the Forbes Billionaires' List with an estimated personal fortune of US$9.1billion, gained mainly from ownership and development of a Russian potash fertiliser company, Uralkali, in which he sold a 53 per cent shareholding to a group of his fellow countrymen in 2010.

Despite the scoffing, the new Monaco

MONACO'S LEAGUE FINISHES 1948-2013



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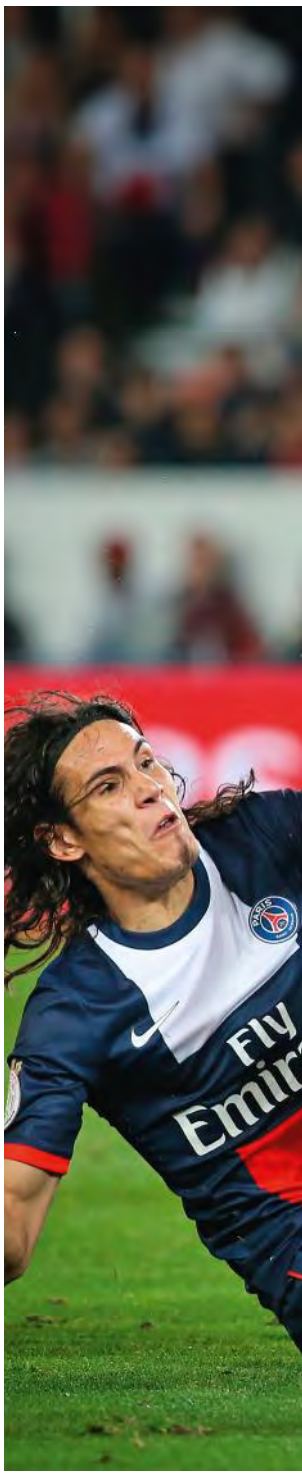


Battle of the big spenders... Monaco keep Paris Saint-Germain striker Edinson Cavani at bay during this season's 1-1 draw in the capital

owner kept his cool and started to plot a way back to glory for his new acquisition.

Under the management of Marco Simone, the club's former Italian striker, Monaco avoided relegation and finished the 2011-12 season in a respectable eighth place in Ligue 2. Perhaps that wasn't so surprising. After all, Rybolovlev's newly created Monaco Sport Investment company had already publicly undertaken to inject €100million into the club over the following four years and had wasted little time in overhauling the playing staff.

First there was the recruitment of 10 players from nine different countries in the winter transfer window of 2011. What surely should have alarmed Simone was the fact that it was newly installed executive director Evgeny Smolentsev who had decided on the transfer targets, not him. Simone admitted that Senegalese striker Ibrahima Toure was the only player he had actively wanted to recruit.

Relieved of duties

A decent finish to the season was not enough to save Simone's skin and the club's vice-president, Dmitry Chechkin, relieved him of his duties in May 2012. Enter another Italian, Claudio Ranieri, much-travelled and out of work since being sacked by Internazionale that March, but bringing a solid reputation as a good tactician with the ability to man manage big-name players.

A coach with a CV as impressive as

> "For me, the first thing is work, the result comes second, and the players have worked hard"
> Claudio Ranieri after Monaco went top of Ligue 1

Work ethic...the Monaco wall ensures a free-kick from Lorient's Yann Jouffre does not threaten their goal

Ranieri's coming to Ligue 2? He had clearly been seduced by Rybolovlev's vision of a glittering Monaco future.

But what exactly has Rybolovlev bought with Monaco? Well it's certainly true that he now owns a club with one of the most impressive honours lists in the French game. Founded in 1924 and a professional outfit since 1948, Monaco have been French champions seven times, have won the French Cup five times and the League Cup once. They

Old boys...Hoddle (left) with Mark Hateley at Monaco in 1987

reached a Champions League Final under coach Didier Deschamps as recently as 2004 and have had some of the most impressive playing alumni in world football.

Michel Hidalgo, Jean-Luc Ettori, Glenn Hoddle, George Weah, Lillian Thuram, Jurgen Klinsmann, Thierry Henry, Emmanuel Petit, Fernando Morientes and Fabien Barthez are just some of the top-class talents who have worn the famous red and white slashed shirt. But Monaco has always been a bizarre club, an anomaly in the modern game. For a start, the team have traditionally competed in the French leagues, despite not being situated on French territory. And Monaco have serviced a Principality whose inhabitants seem more passionate about jet-set lifestyles than football.

The Championship-winning campaign in Ligue 2 last season attracted an average home attendance of just 5,293. A sporting base in Monaco is obviously attractive because of the possibilities it offers for power-

Marquee signing...€60m Falcao

THE POWER CURVE
The key figures behind Monaco

DMITRY RYBOLOVLEV

The Russian multi-billionaire is Monaco's majority stakeholder and has transformed the club with his seemingly limitless cash since buying a 66.6 per cent share in December of 2011. He is also known for his philanthropic donations, including one of €17.5million for the restoration of a Moscow cathedral.

VADIM VASILYEV

An economics graduate who worked as a diplomat before hooking up with Rybolovlev in the former's fertiliser production business. Worked first as Rybolovlev's advisor at Monaco, then became sporting director before taking on the role of vice president last summer. The ultimate right-hand man.

FILIPS DHONDT

The experienced Belgian acts as operations director and has a good footballing pedigree, having worked for a number of clubs including Club Brugge in his native country and Ujpest in Hungary. Joined Monaco in January last year.

RICCARDO PECINI

The club's technical director was brought in by then sporting director Tor-Kristian Karlsen in September 2012 after scouting for Tottenham Hotspur, working as technical director at Sampdoria and running Milan's academy.

KONSTANTIN ZYRYANOV

Not to be confused with the Russian footballer of the same name, Monaco's CEO joined in March and looks after the club's administrative affairs.

broking among the Principality's elite and for legitimising yet another Russian oligarch. But what about the football?

With Rybolovlev's deep pockets backing the sporting project, Ranieri set about the first part of the job, getting Monaco back into the French first division, with the Norwegian Tor-Kristian Karlsen working with him as sporting director. The club recruited experienced and proven performers such as Danish midfielder Jakob Poulsen and Greek full-back Giorgos Tzavellas, together with exciting young Argentinian wiger Lucas Ocampos.

Six-point advantage

Ranieri's team never really looked in danger of missing out on their objectives and finished the campaign as champions, with a six-point advantage over runners-up Guingamp.

However, sporting director Karlsen wasn't there to see captain Andreas Wolf – another experienced signing – lift the trophy, having left the club in January claiming his "other commitments" no longer allowed him to fulfill his functions at Monaco. He had been in the post for less than nine months. Mind you, that was seven months longer than executive director Smolentsev, who had left after just two months of intense wheeler dealing.

Such instability didn't seem to perturb Rybolovlev, though. With Monaco back among France's footballing elite, the Russian immediately set about making sure his team could not only be competitive, but could send the club leaping to the top of the sporting back pages.

Dwarfing the "€100m over four years" promise he had made back in 2011, Rybolovlev lashed out some astronomical sums in the summer of 2013, making absolutely everybody sit up and take notice. Midfielders Joao Moutinho and James Rodriguez arrived from Portuguese champions Porto for a combined fee of €70m, while French stars Jeremy Toulalan, Geoffrey Kongdogbia and Eric Abidal signed on the dotted line for around €25m in total.

Princely...goalscorer Emmanuel Riviere gets a lift from Ocampos

> "I've played at Monaco with just 2,000 people in the stadium. How could you play in those conditions?"
> Former France star David Ginola

But it was the marquee signing of Colombian striker Radamel Falcao from Atletico Madrid for €60m that really got the world's football media excited. The 27-year-old is one of the world's most gifted poachers and could have joined practically any club in the world. The fact that he chose Monaco showed both the financial power of the club and the level of its ambition. In total Monaco spent €166m on their inter-season recruitment campaign.

The investment of such mouth-watering sums in a newly promoted club wasn't welcomed by all, though. A number of French clubs in both the first and second divisions had already started to cry foul in the early part of this year, claiming that Monaco didn't have to pay the same high social charges as they did, for the simple reason that the Principality club was subject to Monaco's tax laws rather than those of the onerous French system.

Tax charges

Following a vote on March 21, a motion was passed by the French clubs to change the League's Statute, obliging all competing clubs to have their business based in the country by June 1 of 2014. This would mean that all of the league's participants would be subject to the same system of tax and social charges, thereby ensuring (according to them) a level playing field. With both sides entrenched in their positions and with Rybolovlev in no mood to kowtow, the matter was referred to the French courts.

There is, however, no doubt that the prevailing attitude towards Monaco has softened in the intervening months. This may well have something to do with the French clubs coming to realise that the

Past glories...a young Thierry Henry lifts the trophy as Monaco win the French title in 1997

PROFIT AND LOSS

THE NUMBERS DO NOT STACK UP

Monaco do not publish annual accounts, but according to figures from the French League they had revenues of €21million in 2011-12, of which matchday income accounted for just €500,000. The wage bill was €31.4m and boosted by the Principality's tax laws. This season, wages will be much higher, following the summer 2013 spending of €166m on new players.

Investment...Rodriguez (left) and Moutinho

Even allowing for increased TV revenues following promotion, it is unlikely Monaco will be able to comply with UEFA's Financial Fairplay regulations if they were to qualify for Europe.

They would require a substantial increase in revenue from ticket sales or a vastly improved sponsorship deal.

more big-name players performing in France, the more there is increased potential for selling worldwide TV rights for Ligue 1. Monaco will clearly put money into everyone's coffers, apart from those who may miss out on European qualification with the arrival of one extra top-class side, of course. With Ligue 1 TV rights selling for just €30m worldwide compared to €590m for the Premier League, it is clear everyone involved needs a more competitive and attractive league to increase overseas appeal and hence revenues.

And let's be honest, nobody seemed all that bothered about Monaco's tax advantages until a Russian billionaire arrived there. France surely needs Monaco every bit as much as Monaco needs France and the likelihood is that an acceptable compromise will be found via the law courts before the end of the year.

Monaco, having not played in European competition in recent years, have yet to fall under the scrutiny of UEFA's Financial Fairplay regulations. But it remains to be seen how the European governing body will deal with Monaco, if and when they qualify for the Champions League or Europa League. As things stand, the club's revenues are significantly lower than their recent spending.

Whatever the looming arguments over finances, one thing is absolutely certain. Monaco will never be an attractive proposition for a player who is looking for more than money, a player who wants to experience the visceral thrill of performing in front of huge sell-out crowds.

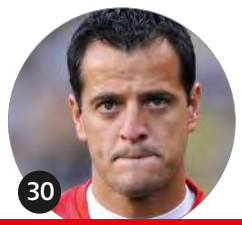
When Falcao scored the only goal of the game against Lorient to put Monaco on top of Ligue 1 on September 15 there were just 8,186 supporters in the club's 18,523-capacity Stade Louis II.

Monaco may have its attractions, but fans who live and breathe football clearly aren't among them. **WS**

Party people...fans let off fireworks to celebrate their club's return to the top flight last May

THE SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS

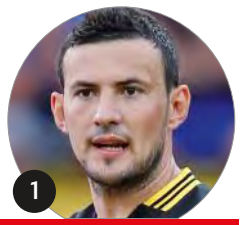


Flavio ROMA (Ita)

Age 39 (21.06.74)
Made over 200 appearances for Monaco between 2001 and 2009 before leaving for Milan. Returned home three years later.

Sergio ROMERO (Arg)

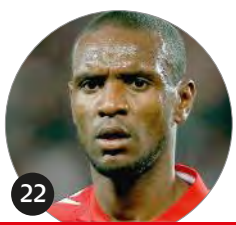
Age 26 (22.02.87)
Argentina international who started his European career with AZ in Holland before joining Sampdoria in 2011, helping the club back into Serie A in 2012. Joined Monaco on loan for the current campaign.



Danijel SUBASIC (Cro)

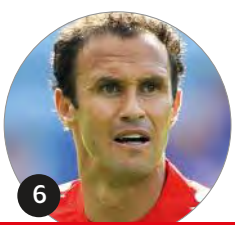
Age 29 (27.10.84)
Signed from Hajduk Split at the start of the "project" in January 2012 when the club were still in Ligue 2. Missed only three league matches in Monaco's promotion run last season.

DEFENDERS



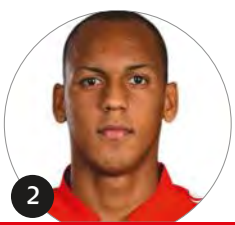
Eric ABIDAL

Age 34 (11.09.79)
Former France international signed in the summer after six years with Barcelona. He underwent a liver transplant in April 2012 but has returned to play top-class football.



Ricardo CARVALHO (Por)

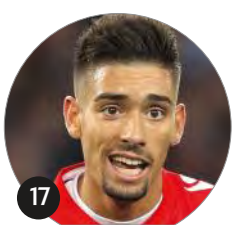
Age 35 (18.05.78)
A rugged centre-back who added steel to Porto, Chelsea and Real Madrid's defences before moving to the Principality in July.



FABINHO (Bra)

Age 20 (23.10.93)
Right-back who joined Real Madrid from Rio Ave in 2012 and has been loaned to Monaco for this season to gain some competitive experience.

MIDFIELDERS



Yannick CARRASCO (Blg)

Age 20 (04.09.93)
Belgium Under-21 winger of Spanish and Portuguese origins who is highly rated in the Principality.

Geoffrey KONDOGBIA

Age 20 (15.02.93)
Defensive midfielder signed from Sevilla for €20million in August after leaving Lens for La Liga a year earlier. Made his senior debut for France in a friendly against Belgium earlier this season, having been an Under-20 World Cup winner during the summer.

Joao MOUTINHO (Por)

Age 27 (08.09.86)
A big-money signing this summer whose arrival made everyone sit up and take notice of Monaco. Vastly experienced and acknowledged as one of Europe's top players.

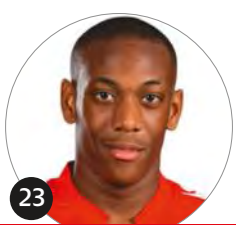
FORWARDS

Radamel FALCAO (Col)

Age 27 (10.02.86)
Arguably the world's finest goalscorer, he could have chosen almost any team in the world, but opted for Monaco, arriving from Atletico Madrid for €60million.

Valere GERMAIN

Age 23 (17.04.90)
The son of ex-France midfielder Bruno Germain, the Under-21 international led the line in Monaco's promotion campaign last term, but has been forced down the pecking order this season.



Anthony MARTIAL

Age 17 (05.12.95)
Under-21 international who signed this summer for €5million after making just three senior appearances for Lyon.

THE STADIUM

STADE LOUIS II

(capacity 18,523)

The venue for the annual UEFA Super Cup game until this season, the original stadium was opened in 1939, with this arena being constructed in the 1980s, close to the old site, on land reclaimed from the sea. It is is named after Louis II, who was the sovereign prince of Monaco when the original stadium was built. Although it has a relatively small capacity compared to some grounds in Europe, it could seat almost two-thirds of the Principality's population. The state of the pitch, however, has often been criticised by visiting teams.

THE KIT

Home Away

20

Nicolas ISIMAT-MIRIN

Age 21 (15.11.91)
A product of the Clairefontaine Academy, he started his pro career with Rennes. Began making headlines after joining Valenciennes in 2009 and was snapped up by Monaco in the summer.

3

Layvin KURZAWA

Age 21 (04.09.92)
Home-grown attacking left-back who was born in France to a Guadeloupian father and a Polish mother. Joined the club's youth system in 2007 and made his first-team debut in September 2010. Recently signed a new five-year deal.

24

Andrea RAGGI (Ita)

Age 29 (24.06.84)
Dependable right-back who played for six different teams in his homeland before joining Monaco from Bologna on a three-year contract in July 2012.

32

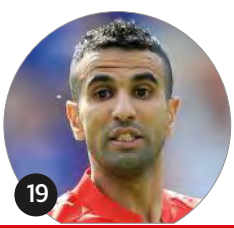
Marcel TISSERAND (DRC)

Age 20 (10.01.93)
French-born defender of Congolese descent who made his first-team debut at the start of this season.

31

Andreas WOLF (Ger)

Age 31 (12.06.82)
Born in the Soviet Union but raised in Germany, he he made over 200 appearances for Nuremberg between 2002 and 2011. Joined Monaco in 2012 after a season with Werder Bremen and led the club to promotion last term.



19

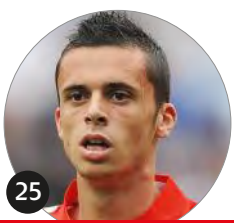
Mounir OBBADI

Age 30 (04.4.83)
Started his career with Paris Saint-Germain but joined Monaco in January after a six-year stint with Troyes, where he helped the club reach Ligue 1 in 2012 after two promotions in three years.

11

Lucas OCAMPOS (Arg)

Age 19 (11.07.94)
Signed from River Plate in August 2012 for €11million, which was a record fee for a club in Ligue 2. Strong, powerful and, at 6ft 2in, poses a big aerial threat.



25

Jessy PI

Age 20 (24.03.93)
Has been at the club since 2008, signing his first pro contract early in 2013 and making his senior debut from the bench against Marseille this season.

10

James RODRIGUEZ (Col)

Age 22 (12.07.91)
Arrived in France in the summer with Porto clubmate Moutinho from for a whopping €45 million. Has a reputation as one of the finest young midfielders in the world.

28

Jeremy TOULALAN

Age 30 (10.09.83)
Dependable former France international who made his name at Lyon before joining Malaga in Spain in the summer of 2011. Signed a two-year deal with Monaco in July 2013.

29

Emmanuel RIVIERE

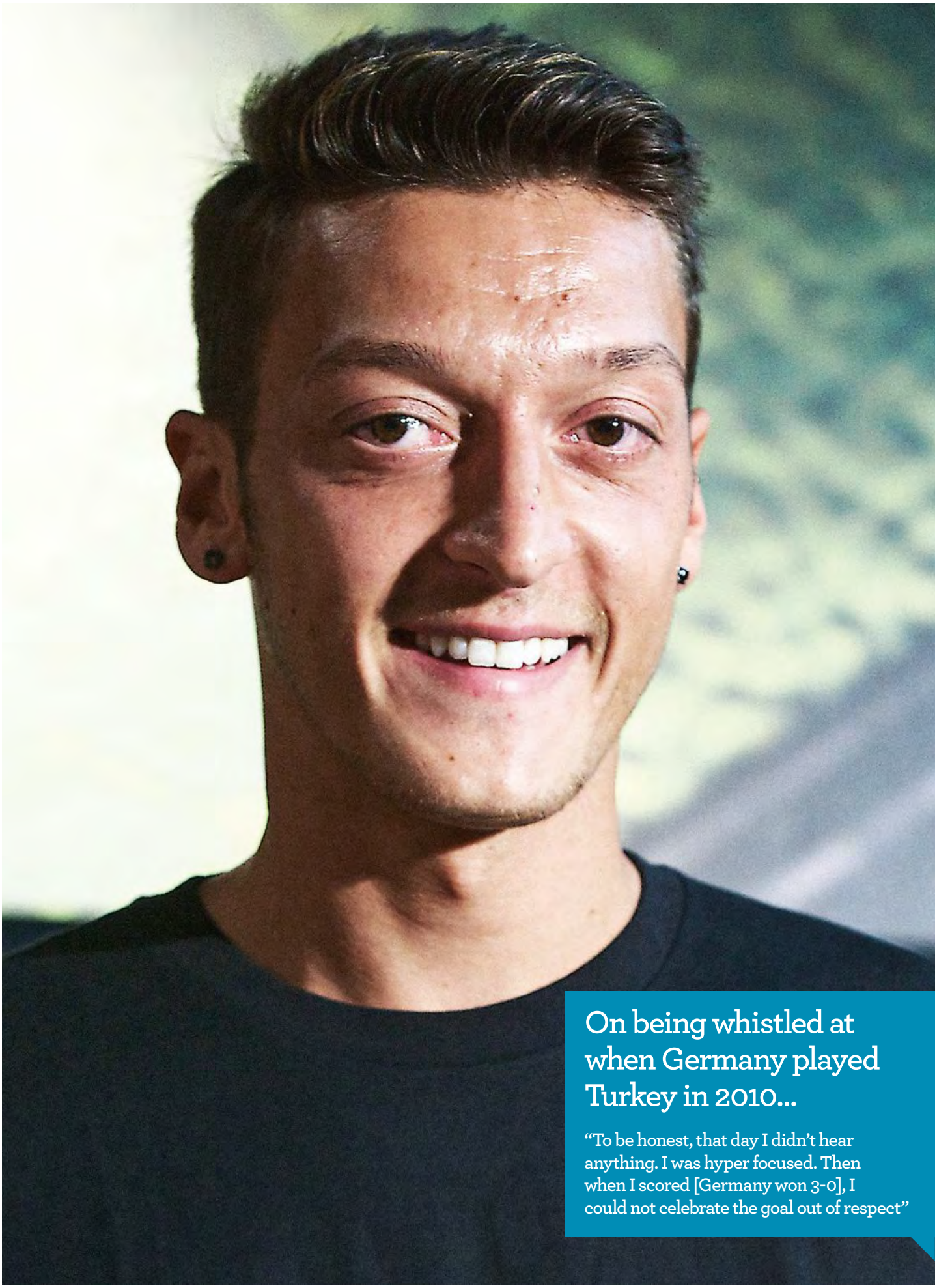
Age 23 (03.03.90)
Signed from Toulouse in January for €4million and scored six goals in his first six games of this season.

THE COACH

Claudio RANIERI (Ita)

Age 61 (20.10.51)

Joined Monaco in May 2012 having previously been in charge of some of Europe's biggest club sides, including Napoli, Atletico Madrid, Chelsea, Juventus, Roma and Internazionale. He took Chelsea to the semi-finals of the Champions League in 2004 – where they were knocked out by Monaco. It was while he was in charge at Stamford Bridge that he was dubbed "the Tinkerman" by the British media for "over-rotating" his squad. He won the 2004 UEFA Super Cup when in charge of Valencia, beating Porto 2-1 at the Stade Louis II stadium.



On being whistled at when Germany played Turkey in 2010...

"To be honest, that day I didn't hear anything. I was hyper focused. Then when I scored [Germany won 3-0], I could not celebrate the goal out of respect"

Facetoface

MESUT OZIL

“I’d rather play the pass that brings the goal than score the goal myself”

Arsenal’s record signing on the art of being a playmaker

You’re younger than Juan Roman Riquelme and Wesley Sneijder. This means that you are the last major no10, right...?
You could say it is as a playmaker that I can best express my talent. I started as a forward, but it was not my thing. I didn’t touch the ball enough, I liked to drop back to pick up the ball, so my coaches have come to understand that it was as a no10 that I was happiest. And there is probably another explanation: Zinedine Zidane. He has always fascinated me. His dribbling, the calmness when he had the ball at the feet...world class. I’ve never seen so much charisma on the field. Not to mention his goals and his roulette [the 360 degree turn]. That was also my move. A move that plays on instinct, on spontaneity. You can’t say, well, my next dribble, it will be a roulette.

When did you fall in love with his game?
I really discovered Zidane during the 1998 World Cup. From that point, when I played on the computer, I was Real or Zidane’s France team. And when I saw him make a move, I would go straight to YouTube and type in “Zinedine Zidane”. I watched and then tried to reproduce his moves outside. Today, when I go back to Gelsenkirchen, and I pass the “monkey cage”, all those memories come flooding back. And when I see the little ones who are playing today, and I notice that some even wear my shirt, it makes me feel something.

Tell us about the “monkey cage”...
I grew up in Gelsenkirchen. I finished school at two o’clock, and every day until eight o’clock I played in a place called “the monkey cage”. It was about five metres by 10 metres, and we played six against six, so that you learn to keep the ball. We needed to think fast, be creative. In the “monkey cage”, the ball could never get out, so there was never a break, it was super-intensive in there. Even when you put it in wrong, the ball came back to you because it’s all enclosed, including the ceiling. I played with my friends against my brother and his friends. They were five years older than us. We played for stuff to eat or drink. We copped it, but I’ve never been afraid on a football field because I was used to playing against bigger and heavier people. I saw that I was a little better than the others, but at the time I had no idea I was going to turn pro. In the cage there were guys who were Totti or Beckenbauer. I was Zidane.

Are you nostalgic?
No, but what I was doing in the cage, I unfortunately cannot always repeat on the pitch. “Real” football is different. My advantage was that I was small, I saw things that nobody saw. Even before receiving the ball, I knew exactly where my team-mates were. It’s still my biggest asset; even today it’s a completely instinctive thing. I’ve never worked at it, I’ve always had it. And it is valuable to the position I play because, unlike a winger, when I get the ball I’m not always in the direction of the game. On the contrary, I am often with my back to goal, so this extra time that I have is what allows me to find the solution more quickly.

Cesc Fabregas once said you were a “very chaotic player”, that you play in a “free” way...
I do not know about players at Barca, all I know is that in modern football you have to do the defensive job. I have freedom, certainly. I can go right, left, drop back, move forward. Today, the no10 is the attacker, but he cannot escape the collective and defensive work of the team. In the past, the playmaker was free, he did what he wanted. Now, football is more compact and everyone must participate in the recovery effort. Football has become much more tactical. When you watch football in the 1970s, tactically it was much less precise and complex. I’m not saying players were weaker, far from it, but now we work more as a team. Besides, this tactical dimension allows small teams to stand up to large teams, which was less the case 30 or 40 years ago.

Do you prefer any particular system?
Whether a 4-4-2 or 4-2-3-1, there is not much difference to my position; I’m still “in the axis”, no matter what. I still prefer to play with two wingers and a centre-forward because it also means I have two defensive players behind me, and then I think it is clearer in attack as there are two guys who cover the channels. With 4-4-2 I often feel the two strikers get in each other’s way. At Real, I was lucky to play with a guy like Cristiano Ronaldo, perhaps the best player in the world, a “cleaner” of spaces. Karim Benzema, too. These guys make your work easier. They know where they need to go, or not go, so that I can give them a good pass at the right tempo. In the national team, I feel a bit the same with [Marco] Reus.

When they get older, playmakers such as Andrea Pirlo drop deeper. Do you also see your future that way?
I do not know. It is about age, but also tactics. Bastian Schweinsteiger leads the game from further back but he is not old. I cannot imagine anything else other than being an attacking playmaker. My role is to help my team-mates through my understanding of the game, to make assists, like Zidane. I prefer to play the pass that brings the goal rather than score myself.

People say you sometimes give the impression of being slow...
Well, maybe because, as I said, I often get the ball with my back to goal, so I have to go back, I can’t go forward immediately. I’m not in a position where I can move forward into space. Having to make the game, play one-twos, it does not give you the opportunity to accelerate.

You once said: “I am German, but my playing style is Turkish” What does that mean?
I have the Turkish side – through my family – which is a little relaxed, but also the German discipline. It’s a good mix, 50-50.

Interview by Ali Farhat/ESM

Facetoface

THIAGO SILVA

“Beating Spain, one of the best teams in the world, definitely shows our intent”

As skipper of Brazil and Paris Saint-Germain, the 28-year-old defender has the biggest season of his career so far ahead of him

PSG will want to make their mark in Europe this season. Did you enjoy the Champions League group-stage draw?
There's no such thing as an easy draw and you just have to look at the history of this competition to see that. Of course, a lot of people will look at PSG's investment and imagine we'd have to make the Final immediately. That's now how the game works – look at Chelsea, who needed eight years to finally win the Champions League for the first time, even after all the money they spent. But we need to go a step further this season. We are aware of the huge expectations surrounding PSG.

Did the quarter-final run last season, when you lost on away goals to Barcelona, raise hope for this season?
Of course. As we know, we were a whisker from the semi-final. I regret we respected Barcelona a bit too much when they came to Paris, but what we did at Camp Nou was beautiful. We could have won the tie.

How are things looking for this European campaign?
Every team can make things hard for you. Of course, Real Madrid, Barcelona, Bayern Munich, Chelsea and Manchester United are teams people expect to do well. But if you are not in the zone the unfancied sides will have you for dinner.

Edinson Cavani's arrival has strengthened PSG, but did it also create a problem in the sense of another ego to handle?
From the outside you might think so, but people don't really know the players. Ibra [Zlatan Ibrahimovic] is seen as a difficult guy but he has adapted to Edinson's arrival...and so far he hasn't moaned! But if he loses the kickabout in training he will sulk for hours. I remember once where he threw a tantrum because I mishit a pass. He apologised later in the funniest way ever and I just had to laugh.

What about Monaco's financial situation? Is it good to see the attention diverted a bit from PSG?
It's great publicity for French football. PSG attracted a lot of interest to Ligue 1 and now Monaco will help a lot. They have made great signings, but it's important to point out that the return on investment is not automatic. PSG, for example, didn't win the league in their first season with the new owners. There are good teams in Ligue 1 and sometimes people dismiss the quality here.

Do people focus too much on how much money PSG are spending?
I actually see a little prejudice because we are a French team. But a lot of people don't follow Ligue 1. I didn't watch many games before coming here, but my opinion has changed radically since I arrived. The league is very competitive. The money thing is always going to be around, but sometimes it seems PSG are the only ones spending money! To win trophies you need to invest. If you want a nice suit you have to invest in fabrics and a good tailor. If players are good they will be expensive.

How much did Leonardo's resignation as sporting director of PSG affect you?
He was crucial in convincing me to come to France and it was sad to see him go. We also had a managerial change, but you have to adapt; football is like that. But the club has been wonderful to me and even accepted my request to have my physiotherapist come to Paris to help with my fitness. I had some nagging injuries last season and really want to be healthy now.

Did Brazil's 3-0 win over Spain in the Confederations Cup Final send out a message ahead of the World Cup?
We did not want to send anybody anything, just to play well. But beating Spain, one of the best teams in the world, definitely shows our intent. It was hard before to hear some people implying Brazil were not inspiring fear anymore. I'd love to hear their thoughts now. Brazil have always respected other teams, even though we refuse to change our ways because of opponents. We didn't sit back, even against Spain. We went for it.

You must admit, though, the *Selecao* seemed transformed in that game...
We spent three days talking about how to play Spain, in the build-up to the Final. We heard the Bayern Munich guys talking about their impressions of *tiki-taka* when they played Barcelona in the Champions League and even [Barca full-back] Dani Alves spoke about the trouble Bayern's pressing high up the pitch had caused them. [Brazil coach] Phil Scolari then asked us: "Want do you want to do?" We replied at the same time: "We want to attack them." Fair play to Big Phil, it was a very good psychological move. But we had to attack Spain if we wanted to win.

How pumped up were you guys?
I had never seen David [Luiz] so focused. He almost did not smile. You looked around and saw everybody wanted really badly to get on the pitch. I still watch the video of that game. We did everything perfectly and everything went our way. Neymar even scored a screamer with his left foot – which we used to joke was only good to press the clutch when he's driving!

Are you favourites to win next summer?
We can't think like that, but it was important to win a trophy and feel we have narrowed the gap to the other teams. A lot of people forget we had massive changes in personnel after the last World Cup and a change of coach as recently as last November. We have bought some time to work and to test the team in the friendlies we have before the tournament, but it would be silly to think we are simply the best around now just because of the Confederations Cup. It did feel good, though...

Interview by Fernando Duarte

On an outside tip for the Champions League...

"I dare say Manchester City could be one of the surprises. They signed Fernandinho and that guy will be great for them. Just wait if he gels well with Yaya Toure"

Donbass Arena

DONETSK

Peterjon Cresswell visits the home of the reigning Ukrainian champions, Shakhtar Donetsk

Home to the winners of the last four Ukrainian league titles, the Donbass Arena is the centre of a footballing empire built by one of the richest men in the country: Shakhtar Donetsk owner Rinat Akhmetov.

Opened in August 2009 with a performance by Beyonce, the futuristic stadium takes its inspiration from the surrounding backdrop of slag heaps in an attempt to embrace the club's past.

The city was built in the mid-19th century by John Hughes, an industrial entrepreneur from Merthyr Tydfil, and it was originally called "Yuzovka" in his honour ("*yuz*" being a local approximation of Hughes).

Hughes also gave his name to the sports association at the town's steelworks. Later, under Communism, Yuzovka became known as "Stalino" and a new club, Stakhanovets, was formed, taking its name from a miner who achieved record targets. After the war, Stakhanovets became Shakhtyor, which was the Russian version of the Ukrainian name, Shakhtar, that was adopted after independence in 1991.

In the free-for-all rush for easy riches in the early 1990s, Donetsk was as wild as anywhere in the Ukraine, with shootings a regular occurrence. And football didn't escape the bloodshed. Akhmetov's predecessor, businessman Akhat Bragin, was president of the club when he was killed in 1995 by a bomb placed at the stadium.

In those days, Shakhtar played at the Olimpiyskiy Stadium, close to today's Donbass Arena and fronted by a huge statue of champion pole vaulter Sergey Bubka, the city's greatest sporting hero. But Akhmetov began investing serious money in the club and football started to take precedence over the likes of athletics, basketball and ice hockey.

Make their mark

Perennial runners-up to Dynamo Kiev, Shakhtar won their first title in 2002 and started to make their mark with the arrival of Romanian coach Mircea Lucescu and Croatia defender Darijo Srna shortly afterwards.

In 2007, Ukraine was named co-hosts of Euro 2012 and stadium development began in four cities. In Donetsk, plans were drawn up for a new stadium: the US$400million Donbass Arena.

Nominated as a semi-final venue, it became an object lesson to any former Soviet oligarch on how to build a football empire behind the old Iron Curtain.

Ringed by two high-end hotels and a recreational park that is still in development, the Donbass Arena is ▸

Imposing...the designers of the Donbass Arena were also responsible for Bayern Munich's Allianz Arena

TICKETS

The main ticket office is on Prospect Mira (9am-8pm daily). It is £1.50-£2 to sit behind either goal, £2.75-£4.70 for the side stands, and £7 for the best seats in the house, overlooking the halfway line. Once inside the stadium, payments are made using the in-house smart card available for a refundable 78p. For details go to https://tickets.shakhtar.com/ru

Landmark...the arena by night

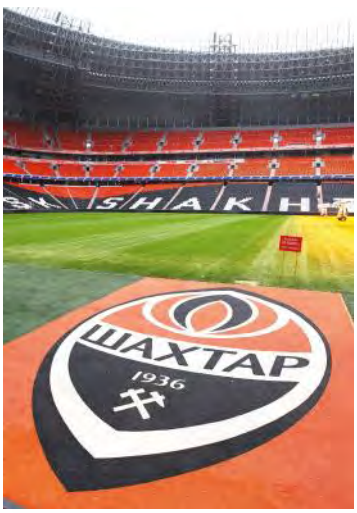
Picturesque...the stadium surrounds

Vivid...the press conference room

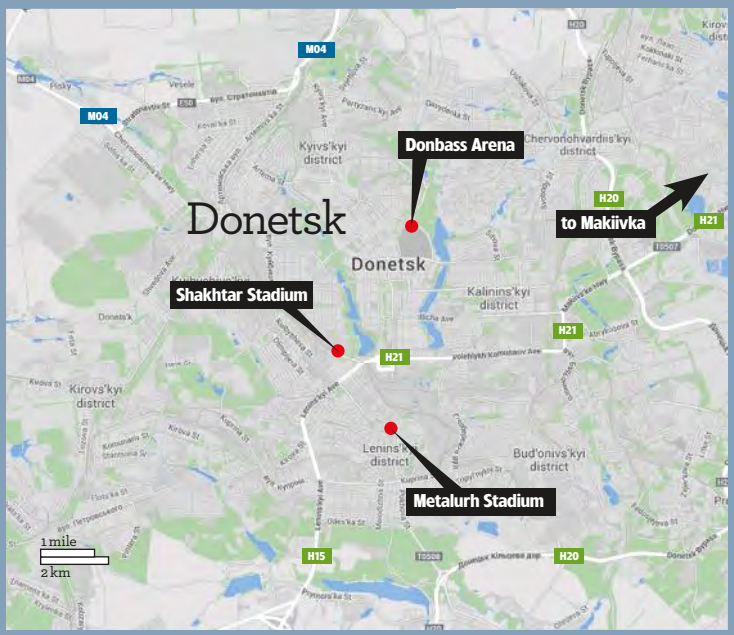
impressive proof of the scale of wealth washing around eastern Europe.

Futuristic appearance
Holding 52,000 spectators in comfortable intimacy close to the pitch, the stadium comprises banks of seating in signature orange and black. Shortly before the Arena was opened, Srna captained the club to victory against Werder Bremen in the 2009 UEFA Cup Final and his image beams down from the top of the superdome, along with other key players. The Arena's somewhat futuristic appearance is no coincidence as designers ArupSport were also behind the Allianz Arena in Munich and the National Stadium in Beijing.

All that is needed now is success in the Champions League. With the 31-year-old Srna and coach Lucescu still leading the way, Shakhtar will this time hope to at least better their quarter-final run of 2011. WS

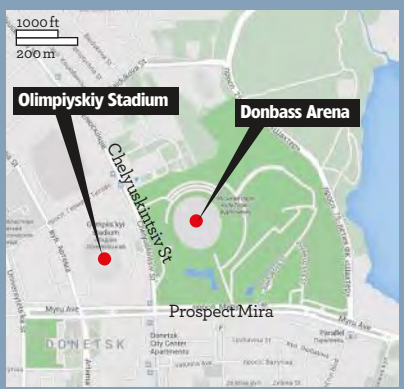


Badge of honour...the club's emblem bears its name in Cyrillic script



Getting your bearings...the Donbass Arena is north of the town centre

HOW TO GET THERE
The Donbass Arena is located in the Voroshylovskyi district and is a 20-minute walk from town. Alternatively, you can take trolleybus 2 along Artyoma to Prospect Mira and walk from there. Trolleybus 8 also runs down Prospect Mira and several trams run north-south along Chelyuskintsev.



Neighbours...Shakhtar's new ground is across the road from their old Olympiyskiy home

EATING & DRINKING
The orange-and-black Fan Cafe by the club offices has scarves of previous opponents, match tickets and press cuttings on the walls. It serves Russian fish soup and chicken shashlik, and you can also play table football. Behind the north stand, by gates D07-D09, the stylish tribune lounge is a nightclub in the evening, but during the day it serves cocktails and beer, with salmon and rib-eye steak also on the menu.

MUSEUM & TOUR
Opening with a timeline from 1936 and eight TV screens running Soviet-era footage, the museum traces the club's origins and goes through its history, decade by decade. The tour takes in the home dressing room, where there is a 17th-century icon, donated by a wealthy fan, that has only left Donetsk once: for the 2009 UEFA Cup Final in Istanbul. Visitors can also march up the tunnel, on to the pitch, to the sound of the *Futbolni Marsh*, which was played before every game in the Soviet Union. Tickets for both the museum and tour can be booked at the main entrance, by the Fan Cafe.

METALURH STADIUM
Home to Shakhtar's Premier League neighbours Metalurh Donetsk, the stadium's official maximum capacity is 5,094 so they often have to lease the 31,718-capacity Shakhtar Stadium (where Shakhtar Donetsk reserves play) for European matches. A new stadium – capable of holding 17,500 – is under construction in Makiivka, 16 miles from the centre of Donetsk. Fifth last season, Metalurh were knocked out of this term's Europa League in the third qualifying round by Kukesi of Albania.

Colour coded...Shakhtar's striking home dressing room

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Big fish in small ponds

Nick Bidwell selects the players who are the standout performers at modest clubs

1 Dario CVITANICH

Nice (Fra)

Logic as well as billing were totally respected this autumn when Nice's most prominent player of the moment became the first goalscorer at the club's new Allianz Riviera stadium, converting a penalty in a 4-0 drubbing of Valenciennes.

Previously with Banfield and Boca Juniors in Buenos Aires, Ajax of Holland and Mexico's Pachuca, the little Argentinian forward of Croat lineage took to Ligue 1 like a duck to water after arriving in the south of France last year. And with 19 goals in the bank by the end of the season he might have immediately decamped to Italy, Spain or Qatar if Nice coach Claude Puel had not dug in his heels so stubbornly. But Puel was determined to hang on to the man widely considered to be the club's most potent foreign striker since Yugoslavia's Nenad Bjekovic in the 1970s.

Reserved and softly-spoken, "Cvita" tends to leave the media spotlight to his model and TV presenter partner, Cecilia Bonelli. He has, however, tried to make himself available for Croatia's national team, only for FIFA to rule that the nationality of his great-grandfather is insufficient grounds.

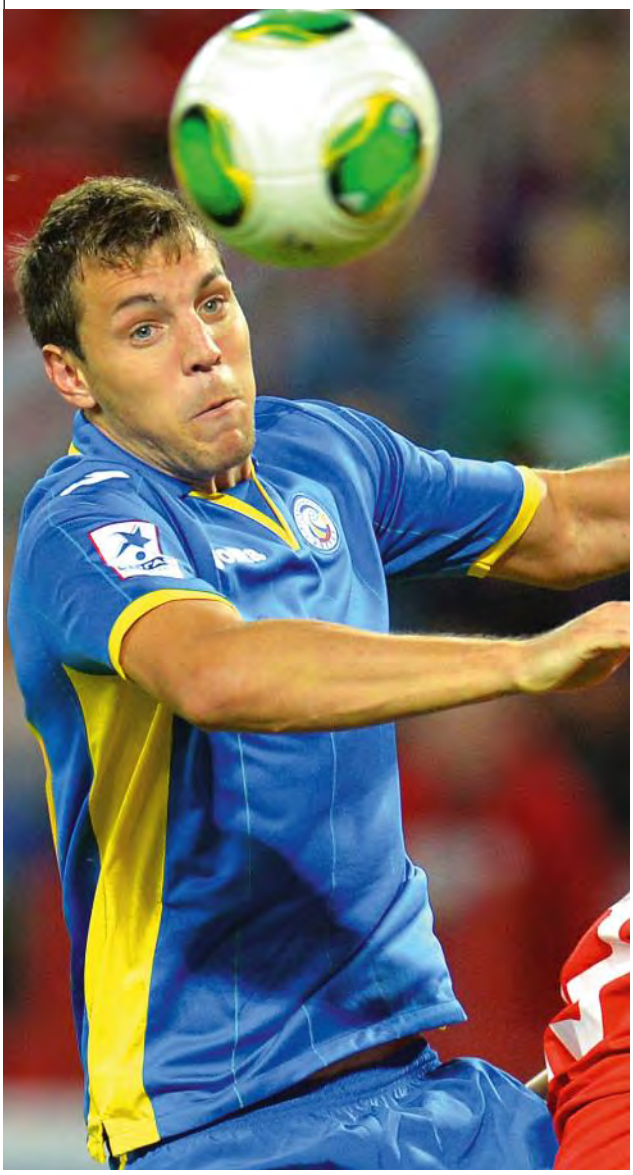
2 Artyom DZYUBA

Rostov (Rus)

Little wonder that Rostov's game plan essentially revolves around getting the ball to their star front man Dzyuba, whose rich vein of goalscoring form this term – seven goals in the opening 10 games – has transformed last season's Russian Premier League relegation candidates into domestic contenders who are targeting their first top-eight finish since 1999.

Currently on a 12-month loan from Moscow Spartak, the 25-year-old is in many ways Russia's answer to Zlatan Ibrahimovic, combining skyscraper height and power with delicate ball-control, mobility and elegance. At 6ft 5in, strikers as tall as Dzyuba are not supposed to manipulate the ball with such ease and one of his strongest suits is his ability to wriggle out of the tightest of spots.

The Russia international also has something of Ibrahimovic's character and displays the same apparent need to be outspoken and difficult.



3 Ruben GARCIA

Levante (Spa)

It speaks volumes for the multi-talented Spain Under-20 winger that, despite only figuring in the Levante first team for a little more than a year, he is already widely recognised as one of the brightest sparks in La Liga and reportedly on the shopping list of Champions League participants both home and abroad.

At Levante, the no11 shirt has a history of bringing bad luck, with its wearer often suffering the curse of the substitutes' bench or the treatment room. But it has certainly not done the 20-year-old any harm. Although he favours the right flank, he can also shine on the left or as a striker, with his velocity, versatility and dribbling skills making him the most slippery of customers.

An admirer of the former Real Madrid great Raul, he will not find it easy to wave goodbye to the club he has supported since he was a boy. He originally broke into the Levante first team after a man-of-the-match performance in a game between the club's professionals and juniors.

4 Davide ASTORI

Cagliari (Ita)

Cagliari president Massimo Cellino is above all else a pragmatist. Awash with offers for the Italy international centre-back Astori from Roma, Milan and Napoli, he must have been tempted to take the money and run. But mindful that he would find it almost impossible to bring in an adequate replacement, he decided to circle the wagons instead, persuading the 26-year-old to stick with the Sardinian simple life: which consists of marshalling the *Rossoblu* rearguard and running an ice-cream parlour in the centre of town.

Astori is living proof that uptown rejection need not necessarily mean career oblivion. After failing to make the transition from Milan youth ranks to first team, he has fought back magnificently at Cagliari over the past five years. He has been involved with the Italy squad ever since Cesare Prandelli took over three years ago and he took part in this summer's Confederations Cup.

5 Gaston SANGOY

Apollon (Cyp)

A contemporary of Carlos Tevez in the Boca Juniors youth team, the 28-year-old front runner may not have enjoyed the same illustrious career as his former team-mate, but he has not faded away either. He is regarded as footballing royalty in Cyprus, where in two spells with Apollon his swashbuckling style, explosive finishing with either foot and brilliant free-kicks have endeared him to so many.

After three highly productive seasons leading the Limassol-based club's strike force, "El Toro" joined Sporting Gijon in 2010. However, with the Spanish club in dire financial straits and unable to pay his wages, he was deemed a free agent this summer and was more than happy to head back to Apollon, where he immediately reaffirmed his credentials with both goals in the 2-0 home win over Nice in the Europa League.

Having left Buenos Aires in 2005, he had a short spell on loan at Ajax and then played in Peru, Colombia and Israel before settling down in Cyprus.

6 Matthias GINTER

Freiburg (Ger)

Freiburg, well aware they would never be in a position to compete with the Bundesliga big boys in terms of cash flow, decided a dozen years ago to put the lion's share of their limited resources into youth development. And of the 36 youngsters who have subsequently made the first team, no one has created more of a buzz than this 19-year-old central defender.

Possessing inner and outer strength, speed off the mark, a sharp football brain and technical sophistication, Ginter (right, in red) has been with his home-town club from the age of 11. Since then there have been repeated selections for Germany youth and under-21 sides, plus awards for being the best under-18 and under-19 player in the country, and the winning goal on his professional debut, against Augsburg in January 2012.

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Talentscout

Zakaria BAKKALI

CLUB	PSV (Hol)
COUNTRY	Belgium
POSITION	Winger
AGE	17 (26.01.96)

The currently popular football initiation ceremony of singing in front of your new team-mates is not for PSV's Zakaria Bakkali. Rather than indulge in a spot of off-key karaoke, the teenager preferred his induction to be staged on the pitch, making his first-team debut in August against Zulte Waregem in a Champions League qualifier and then scoring in the return a week later. He followed that up with a hat-trick as PSV beat NEC 5-0 in the league.

At 17 years and 196 days, Bakkali was the youngest player to score a triple in the Dutch top flight, with his third goal showcasing his effortless capacity for the decisive and the magical. A quick burst of pace saw him collect the ball out wide on the left before he jinked inside to the edge of the box and curled a right-footed shot into the far top corner.

> "He shows great individual skills, but he is also a genuine team player who never shirks his defensive duties"
>
> PSV coach Phillip Cocu

Happy on either flank, the Liege-born youngster of Moroccan stock can also deliver as a central striker. Electric on the ball, he is a finisher of supreme confidence and, having already been called into the full Belgium squad, he will fancy his chances of making next summer's World Cup finals.

That he is still at the Philips Arena in Eindhoven is something of an achievement. Five years after PSV prised the youngster away from Standard Liege, he was said to be unsettled in Holland due to a poor working relationship with PSV youth coach Marco Roelofsen. He believed the club had reneged on a promise to let him train with the senior squad from time to time.

With a slew of would-be suitors circling – including Manchester City, Fulham and Anderlecht – a parting of the ways looked likely last term until head coach Dick Advocaat selected him for PSV's mid-season tour of Thailand.

"In Bangkok, I noticed a young player with all the qualities that are required to break through at this club," declared Advocaat. "That's why he will be regularly training with us from now on."

With Phillip Cocu having succeeded Advocaat, Bakkali has been given his chance – and he is now the leading light in a young PSV side that features very few players over the age of 22.

Nick Bidwell

Confident beginning...Bakkali on his first-team debut in August, making a 10-minute appearance as a substitute in the Champions League

Sidney SAM

CLUB	Bayer Leverkusen
COUNTRY	Germany
POSITION	Winger
AGE	25 (31.01.88)
PREVIOUS CLUBS	Hamburg, Kaiserslautern (on loan)
CAPS	3 (0 goals)
INTERNATIONAL DEBUT	v Ecuador, May 2013

With a name that sounds more like a character in a 1930s' US crime novel, Bayer Leverkusen's right-winger is currently busy writing a few thrillers of his own – and he has been so influential for the Rhinelanders this term that many expect him to be on the plane for Germany's World Cup expedition next year.

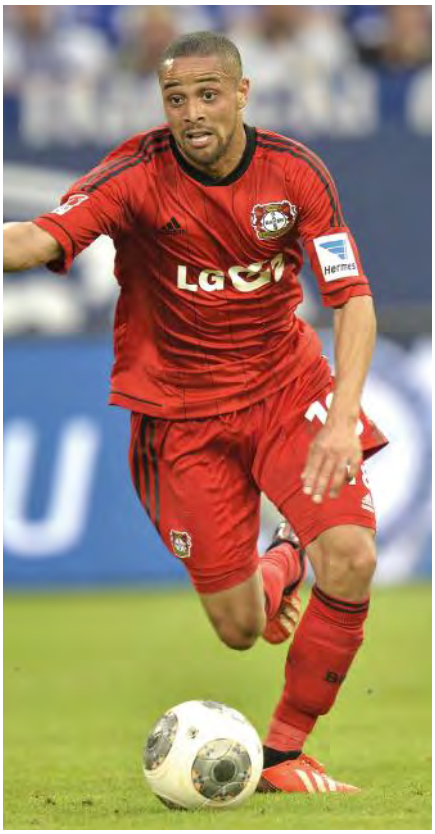
It is good to see the German-born son of a Nigerian father back in the groove after two seasons liberally sprinkled with back and hamstring problems. Restricted to 26 starts for Leverkusen during that period, he has managed to remain injury free since the turn of the year thanks to a spine-strengthening programme. And his physical about-face has facilitated a first senior cap for Germany, plus rave reviews in the Bundesliga and Champions League.

In recent outings with the national side, Sam has had to grin and bear it as unsuspecting foreign journalists mangled his name: "Sydney Sam" according to Ecuadorian media, "Sam Sidney" when facing the USA, and "Sam Sidnay" in a World Cup qualifier against the Faroe Islands. However, such an identity crisis should become ancient history as his profile increases.

Bought by Leverkusen from Hamburg for €1.75million in the summer of 2010, Sam is the master of all he surveys at the moment. With his bursts of acceleration, powers of invention and fizzing left-footed shooting, he is both a creator and a finisher. In his element in one-on-one situations and on the counter-attack, he is benefitting from his much-improved conditioning. Greater maturity has played its part too, resulting in a more patient, composed and confident individual; one who is far less likely to drift out of games or display negative body language.

> "Earning a spot in the Germany team has been so important for me. It's given me so much self-belief"
>
> Sidney Sam

Nick Bidwell



Fitter...Sam has benefitted from strengthening his spine

True colours...Hajrovic scored on his debut for Bosnia

Izet HAJROVIC

CLUB	Grasshoppers (Swi)
COUNTRY	Bosnia-Herzegovina
POSITION	Midfielder
AGE	22 (04.08.91)
CAPS	1 (0 goals) for Switzerland; 2 (1 goal) for Bosnia
INTERNATIONAL DEBUT	v Tunisia, November 2012, for Switzerland; v Slovakia, September 2013, for Bosnia
HONOURS	2013 Swiss Cup

Having made the headlines in his native Switzerland for his explosive left-footed shooting and deadly free-kicks with Grasshoppers, the attacking midfielder now finds himself cast as the villain of the piece in a messy dual-nationality controversy.

Born in the northern canton of Aargau to Bosnian parents, Hajrovic made his full international debut for Switzerland in a friendly game last year. However, eight months later he decided to pledge his allegiance to Bosnia and swiftly made his debut in their World Cup qualifying campaign.

Predictably, the volte-face was not to the liking of the Swiss press, who littered reports with accusations of "betrayal". They also pointed out what they felt Hajrovic "owed" to Switzerland, having started a new life there after his family fled the horrors of war in the Balkans. His education, close to a decade of instruction at the Grasshoppers academy and a good dollop of experience with Switzerland's under-20 and under-21 sides all counted for nothing, it was suggested.

Clearly stung by the reaction to his decision, Hajrovic admits mishandling the situation but remains defiant as to his motives.

"In hindsight, I should have met with the national coach Ottmar Hitzfeld and the Swiss federation to explain my decision," says Hajrovic, whose younger brother, Saed, is a centre-back for Grasshoppers and Bosnia.

> "I am not a traitor. I am thankful for everything Switzerland has done for me. It was not a decision against Switzerland but one for my career"
>
> Izet Hajrovic

"Following that short substitute appearance in the friendly with Tunisia, I wasn't selected once for Switzerland. The Bosnians became even more persistent, leading me to reconsider.

"I've a huge amount of respect for Ottmar Hitzfeld, who really is a great coach. But my goal is to take part in the World Cup in Brazil."

Nick Bidwell

Giorgian DE ARRASCAETA

CLUB	Defensor
COUNTRY	Uruguay
POSITION	Midfielder
AGE	19 (01.06.94)
HONOURS	2013 Uruguayan clausura

It will either happen at the end of this year, if they fail to qualify for the World Cup finals; or, if they make it to Brazil, then the process will be postponed until after next summer. Either way, Uruguay's national team will soon embark on a major rebuilding process, with graduates from a succession of promising youth sides stepping up to the senior ranks.

Last year's Olympic Games in London was supposed to showcase the country's two best young talents, with playmakers Nicolas Lodeiro and Gaston Ramirez – the former a short-passing give-and-go type of player, the latter a long-ball specialist – tipped to shine. However, both were disappointing and they now could be eclipsed by a young attacking midfielder who combines the virtues of both.

De Arrascaeta only made his first-team debut for Defensor as a substitute at the end of October last year, and at the start of 2013 he was nothing more than a promising bit-part player in Uruguay's Under-20 Championship squad. But, as befits the son of a jockey, his career was soon to gather pace.

The revelation of the domestic season, he played a key role as Defensor won the clausura title before they lost out to Penarol in the battle for the overall 2012-13 crown. Then, in the Under-20 World Cup in July, his partnership with striker Nico Lopez saw Uruguay reach the Final, where they narrowly failed to beat France.

De Arrascaeta came closest to a goal in extra time, bursting past two defenders and forcing a fine stop from the goalkeeper as the game finished 0-0. It was cruel, then, when his penalty was also saved in the shoot-out as the French triumphed 4-1.

But the range of De Arrascaeta's talent was obvious to a number of observers. His ability to turn with the ball, to play long or short off either foot, to combine, to go on jinking runs, to burst past the defensive line and get into the penalty area – all of these attributes have attracted interest from Barcelona, as well as, perhaps more relevantly for his short-term future, Sevilla and CSKA Moscow.

Defensor's president Daniel Jablonka was referring directly to De Arrascaeta when he commented that "the economic realities of Uruguayan football mean that it's not viable to think of keeping the player while his value rises".

> "It's an honour for the player, for the institution – and, whatever happens, the mere fact that a club like Barcelona is interested in Giorgian is a source of pride" Defensor president Daniel Jablonka

An offer somewhere in the region of €3million would probably be enough to tempt the club into parting company with a player who is set to play a big part in Uruguay's future.

Tim Vickery

Making his presence felt...Giorgian De Arrascaeta (left) tussles with Iraq's Saif Salman during the Under-20 World Cup semi-final

Green giant...Zouma has impressed at Saint-Etienne

Kurt ZOUMA

CLUB	Saint-Etienne
COUNTRY	France
POSITION	Centre-half
AGE	18 (27.10.94)
HONOURS	2013 Under-20 World Cup, 2013 French League Cup

Decidedly unimpressed that their club has fallen away somewhat after many years of domestic dominance and now have to sell leading players to balance the books, Lyon supporters will have been further irritated by the sight of local boy Zouma excelling with regional rivals Saint-Etienne.

A key figure in France's Under-20 World Cup victory in July, Zouma was born and bred in the Lyon suburb of Vaulx-en-Velin and as a schoolboy was offered a place in the OL academy, only to turn it down. At the time he supported Marseille and rightly or wrongly saw Lyon as the enemy.

Instead, he opted for a stint at one of France's youth development centres in Dijon, and two years later, at the age of 14, he was picked up by Saint-Etienne, where he took less than two seasons to earn a professional contract and a first-team debut early in the 2011-12 season.

Of central African descent, a host of top English, German, Italian and Spanish clubs are reported to be tracking the central defender who has the physique of a boxer and the athleticism of a decathlete.

"The only way to describe Kurt is to use the word precocious," says Abdel Bouhazama, his coach with the Saint-Etienne youth team.

"He's a force of nature, one of those very big babies who grows up to be a physically advanced adult. He's a natural leader. Despite his youth he is not afraid to harangue his team-mates and is amazingly influential because of his spirit and generosity of effort."

France coach Didier Deschamps, not normally one to praise youngsters, called the teenager into the senior squad for October's friendly against Australia.

> "While it's human to sometimes become big-headed, I can't see the point. I wasn't brought up to be like that"
>
> Kurt Zouma

Intrepid, a quick learner and extremely level-headed, Zouma admits: "I still need to mature with Saint-Etienne. I'm more determined than ever to carry on working on my game."

Nick Bidwell

Federico VICO

CLUB	Anderlecht (Blg)
COUNTRY	Spain
POSITION	Midfielder
AGE	19 (04.07.94)

A touch of Spanish class is a must-have item for clubs the length and breadth of Europe these days, and Belgian champions Anderlecht have added just that with one of Iberia's brightest attacking-midfield prospects.

Vico's only experience of senior football before arriving in Brussels may have been in Spain's second tier with home-town Cordoba, but he has been a shining light in every national representative side from under-16 to under-20.

> "I know there will be much competition for places in the team, but will do all I can to prove to the coach he can trust me"
>
> Federico Vico on his immediate future at Anderlecht

Bearing in mind the long list of clubs who had been monitoring his progress – including Real Madrid, Barcelona, Atletico Madrid, Sevilla, Real Betis, Liverpool and Swansea City – his switch to Belgium was anything but predictable. But given a regular diet of first-team football, Anderlecht's €1.5million investment could soon be paying dividends.

"Anderlecht's offer was the most concrete one I had," says Vico, who catapulted into the limelight last season with a stunning Spanish Cup performance against Barcelona.

"I've come to a club of great tradition in Europe. This is a good step forward in my development. Anderlecht will be in the Champions League and that was important in my decision."

"My father has told me about the great Anderlecht side of the 1980s, with Enzo Scifo. I've signed here to play regularly and win matches and trophies."

At his most dangerous operating behind the strikers, but also comfortable on either flank, Vico is an inspired passer and a dazzling dribbler. Mature enough to make his first-team debut for Cordoba at just 16, he has good technique and endurance, and packs an almighty punch in his left foot. Fittingly for an economics undergraduate, he is not short of grey matter either.

Nick Bidwell

Remember the name...Vico with his Anderlecht shirt

Keir Radnedge

THE INSIDER

The expert view on events off the pitch

UEFA ponders the Istanbul question

Problems in Turkish football may derail Euro 2020 bid

Turkey may have to think again if it believes UEFA will meekly hand over the final matches of Euro 2020 out of sympathy because Istanbul failed to land the Olympic Games.

Once upon a time Turkey was a shoo-in for 2020. But that was when the finals tournament was still a single (or co-host) entity and it had earned the sympathies of UEFA president Michel Platini after losing out by only one vote to France, 7-6, for Euro 2016.

With the economic downturn deterring other bidders, Turkey was set to land 2020. Germany had a look, thought about it, then decided against. This left only co-hosting interest from Georgia/Azerbaijan and Republic of Ireland/Scotland – and neither sparked delight at UEFA's lakeside headquarters in Nyon.

The perfect launching pad for a victorious march was UEFA Congress in Istanbul in the spring of 2012. Platini popped over to Ankara for an audience with prime minister Recep Erdogan, who promised full governmental support for the bid.

Then Erdogan travelled to watch the London Olympics – where he was won over by the matchless prospect of worldwide kudos to be generated from a construction project which could be neatly assimilated into his multi-zillion euro plan to further enhance the lifestyles and income of his property-developer cronies.

Both UEFA and the IOC had long made it clear that Erdogan and co could not have both Euro 2020 and the Olympics. Platini had already grown irritated and impatient with Turkish prevarication. Hence, even before Erdogan was chaperoned around the wonders of the London Olympic Park, Platini had come up with his pan-European proposal for Euro 2020.

When he dropped it on his executive committee, at the end of Euro 2012 in Kiev, it was a warning shot across Turkey's bows. By the time Platini and his ExCo colleagues reassembled at the Champions League draw in Monte Carlo in August last year the die was well and truly cast.

Chaos...rioting fans hurl seats at police during the Besiktas-Galatasaray derby

> "The intention of our new law is to make the penalties more of a deterrent for troublemakers"
>
> Turkish sports minister Suat Kilic

Turkey, Platini intimated, had missed the boat. Not only that but "if they expect us to wait for the Olympic decision and then, perhaps, have Euro 2020 as a consolation then this is impossible; we don't wait on them".

Since then the Turkish tale has been of anything but delight.

Istanbul lost the Olympics to Tokyo because it flew to the IOC session in Buenos Aires in September with too much baggage:

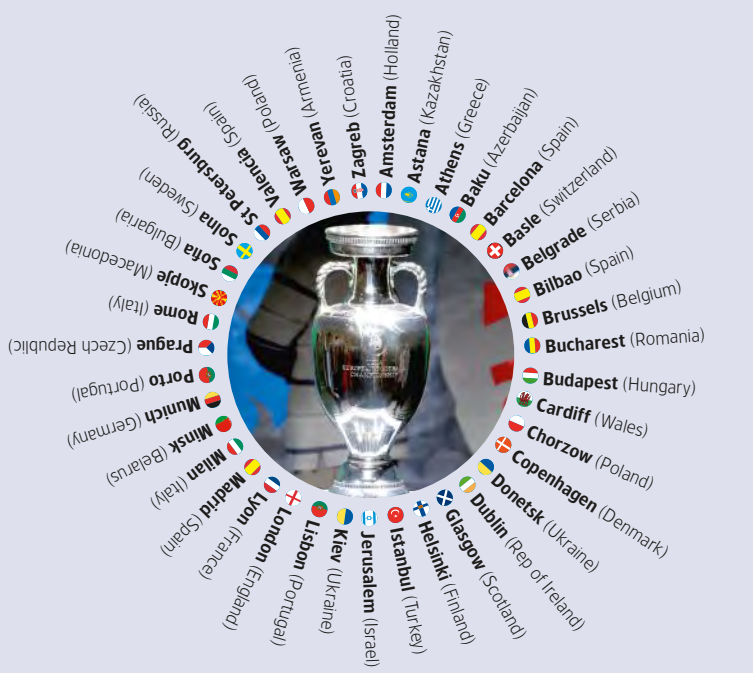
- the weight of street unrest over one construction project (Taksim Gezi Park);
- heavy-handed policing inspired by Erdogan's medieval rant over the evils of social media;
- endemic doping among the country's track and field athletes;
- poor attendances across the nation for FIFA's World Youth Cup;
- the absence of any contrition over the match-fixing saga which led to Fenerbahce and Besiktas being barred from Europe this season.

On this last point, Fenerbahce and Besiktas exacerbated the "sin" by insisting on taking hopeless cases to the Court of Arbitration for Sport on the very eve of the draws for the group stage of the Champions League and Europa League.

Then there was Turkey's European Under-21 qualifier against Sweden that had to be interrupted for an hour after tear gas being deployed by police against street protesters nearby drifted

No so friendly...UEFA president Platini (left) tired of the Turkish prime minister's prevarication over Euro 2020

CITIES INTERESTED IN HOSTING EURO 2020 GAMES



The tournament will be staged in 13 cities, with a maximum of one venue per country. Cities can bid to host three group matches and a knockout-round game, or to host the semi-finals and Final. The closing date for bids is April 25, with UEFA's ExCo announcing the host cities on September 25, 2014.

Anti-hooligan laws...sports minister Suat Kilic

into the Erdogan Stadium.

Worse still, the Besiktas v Galatasaray derby in the Ataturk Stadium (which would have been the Olympic Stadium) was abandoned in stoppage time after a riot that followed the expulsion of Galatasaray's Felipe Melo. Some 29 arrests were made.

Two days later sports minister Suat Kilic reacted by proposing a tough new law on hooliganism, with extended stadium bans and prison sentences. This built on earlier orders from Erdogan to bar political chanting within sports grounds. Erdogan may use sports venues for his set-piece speeches, but that is different...

Kilic also said the Turkish government would seek UEFA agreement that police officers, rather than civilian stewards, should be in charge of crowd control in major stadia. This runs counter to the policy of UEFA and FIFA that formal stewarding of supporters is preferable to the use of police personnel which risks inflaming tempers.

None of this seems particularly likely to encourage UEFA to take the Euro finals to Turkey. **WS**

Authorities finally catch up with match-fixer Dan Tan

Questioned...Dan Tan's associate Perumal

The detention of the match-fixer known as Dan Tan and four of his closest aides is belated but welcome all the same.

Dan Tan, whose real name is thought to be Tan Seet Eng, has been the bogey man of world football for years, ever since the Belgium/Finland match-fixing scandals of the 1990s were exposed.

It has taken from then until now for the authorities in Singapore – where he lives and manipulates the world game – to find an excuse to catch up with him. An increasing flood of negative international publicity may have helped propel them into examining files from the Italian prosecutors and Interpol.

This was not the first time Dan Tan has been arrested over his alleged role at the head of a network responsible for fixing matches from Africa to eastern Europe to central America. The latest action followed a high-speed operation in Australia, where 10 people were arrested over alleged match fixing by players of the Southern Stars club in the Victoria Premier League.

Melbourne police believe the operation was set up by Wilson Raj Perumal, a long-time associate of Dan Tan – even though Perumal was in Hungary at the time "helping police" with investigations into match fixing there.

Italian prosecutors previously laid court documents in Singapore, claiming that dozens of league and cup games have been fixed by Dan Tan's network over the past five years.

Club officials, referees and players worldwide have been implicated in the scams, which led to millions of dollars being generated by betting on rigged games between 2008 and late 2011.

Yet Dan Tan appears comparatively safe. He is understood to be confident that he has committed no crime within Singapore itself – and Singapore has no extradition treaties with interested countries.

The prospect is that he will be held indefinitely as a risk to the city-state but never brought to trial. Which is not a happy prospect.

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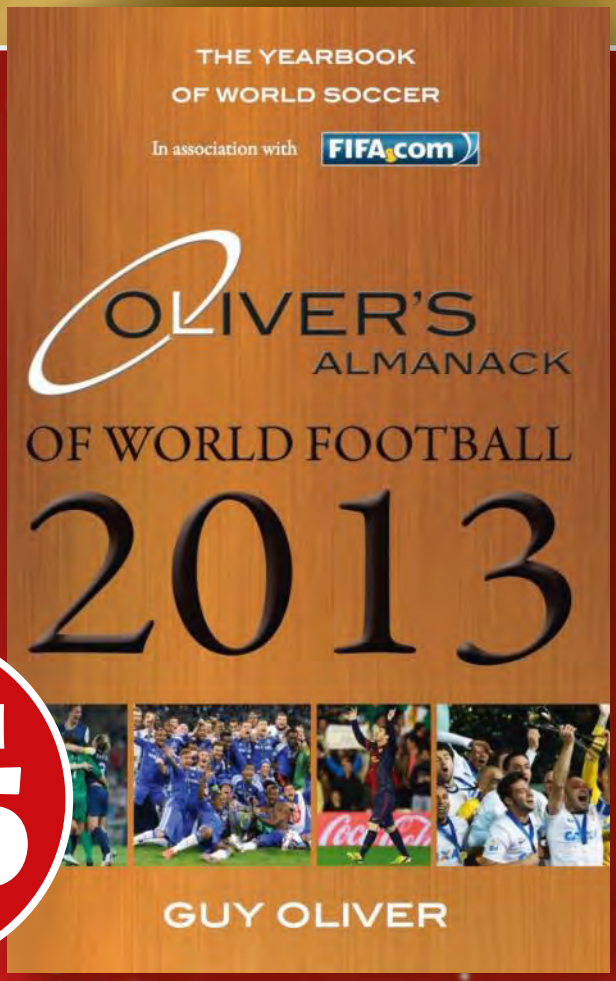

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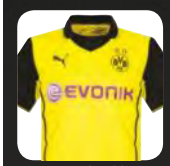
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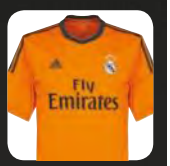
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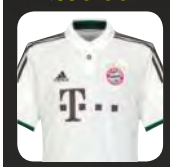
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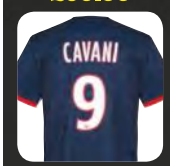
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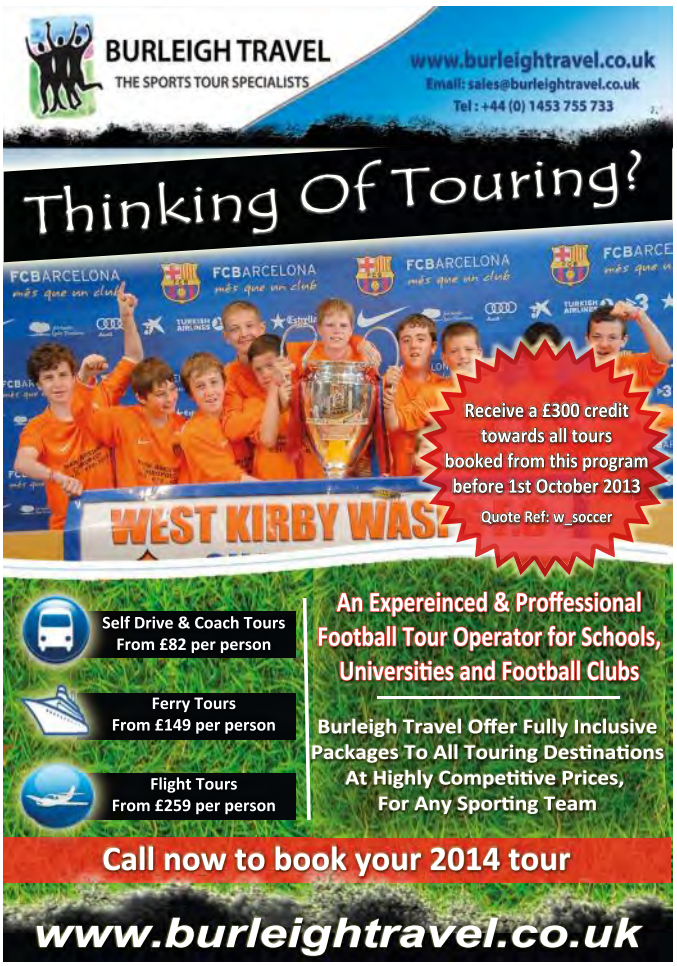

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World Service

The ultimate global news & results section

Clash...Manchester City goalkeeper Joe Hart tries to stop Thomas Muller of Bayern Munich in the UEFA Champions League

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Winners...Guangzhou Evergrande make the Asian Final

World Service

BOTSWANA

Anniversary victory

Lemponye Tshireletso, a midfielder with Botswana Defence Force, scored the only goal of the game as a national side made up of locally-based players beat Burkina Faso 1-0 in a friendly to mark the climax of the country's 47th Independence anniversary celebrations.

EL SALVADOR

Match fixing bans

El Salvador's FA imposed life bans on 14 international players for match fixing.

The banned players are: goalkeepers Dagoberto Portillo and Miguel Montes; defenders Ramon Flores, Miguel Granadino, Luis Anaya, Alfredo Pacheco, Mardoqueo Henriquez, Marvin Gonzalez and Reynaldo Hernandez; and midfielders Osael Romero, Darwin Bonilla, Dennis Alas, Ramon Sanchez and Christian Castillo.

Banned for life...Romero

MOROCCO

Nations Cup venues

The 2015 African Nations Cup will be staged in the cities of Agadir, Marrakech, Rabat and Tangier. The finals, which will involve 16 teams, will be staged from January 17 to February 7.

A two-leg preliminary round will be played next July and August, with the remaining 48 teams split into 12 qualifying groups, with two rounds of games to be played in September, October and November.

The 12 group winners and the best three runners-up will join hosts Morocco in the finals.

Internationals

FRIENDLIES

Monday, September 30

Sep 30 - Gaborone
Botswana 1 (Tshireletso 47)
Burkina Faso 0
HT: 0-0

Sep 30 - Cairo
Egypt 2 (Eid 7, Emam 68)
Uganda 0
HT: 1-0
Egypt: El Shenawy - Gaber (Ali), Said, Alaa (Abdel Fattah), Abdelshafy, Abd Rabo (Tawfik), El Solayya, Ibrahim (Emam), Shikabala (Samir), Eid (Temsah), Hamoudi.

Wednesday, October 2

Oct 2 - Cairo
Egypt 3 (Eid 29, Abdelshafy 77, Samir 84)
Uganda 0
HT: 1-0
Egypt: Sobhy (El Shenawy) - Emam (Ali), Said, Alaa (Ibrahim), Abdelshafy, Abd Rabo, El Solayya, Abdel Fattah, Hamoudi (Gaber), Eid (Samir), Temsah (Tawfik).

Saturday, October 5

Oct 5 - Shenzhen, China
United Arab Emirates 2 (Saleh 65, Mabkhout 79)
Laos 0
HT: 0-0

Sunday, October 6

Oct 6 - Beirut, Lebanon
Iraq 3 (Radhi 26, Nadhim 54, Mahmoud 73)
Yemen 2 (Hanash pen 42, Al Worafi 90)
HT: 1-1

FRIENDLY FIXTURES

Saturday, November 9

Bahrain v Lebanon (Riffa)
United Arab Emirates v Philippines (Abu Dhabi)

Friday, November 15

Belgium v Colombia (Brussels)
Estonia v Azerbaijan (Tallinn)
India v Philippines
Italy v Germany
Scotland v United States (Glasgow)

Saturday, November 16

Holland v Japan (Genk, Belgium)
Honduras v Brazil (Miami, USA)
Wales v Finland (Cardiff)

Tuesday, November 19

Kyrgyzstan v Azerbaijan (Bishkek)
Liechtenstein v Estonia (Vaduz)

CECAFA CUP

(Council for East and Central Africa Football Associations)

To be staged in Kenya, Nov 27-Dec 12, 2013

Venues: Nairobi, Kisumu, Mumias, Nakuru, Mombasa (optional)

CECAFA members: Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zanzibar

2013 tournament invited teams: Ivory Coast, Malawi, Zambia

Previous winners
(10 most recent)

2003	Uganda
2004	Ethiopia
2005	Ethiopia
2006	Sudan[1]
2007	Sudan
2008[2]	Uganda
2009	Uganda
2010	Tanzania
2011	Uganda
2012	Uganda

[1]Zambia beat Sudan in the Final but because Zambia were a guest team, Sudan were awarded the trophy
[2]Tournament originally scheduled to be played in late 2008 actually took place in early 2009

AFRICAN NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP

(continental tournament exclusively for players based in the country they represent)

To be staged in South Africa, Jan-Feb 2014

Match schedule

Group A
All games in Cape Town

Jan 11 South Africa v Mozambique
Mali v Nigeria
Jan 15 South Africa v Mali
Nigeria v Mozambique
Jan 19 Nigeria v South Africa
Mozambique v Mali

Group B
All games in Cape Town

Jan 12 Zimbabwe v Morocco
Uganda v Burkina Faso
Jan 16 Zimbabwe v Uganda
Burkina Faso v Morocco
Jan 20 Burkina Faso v Zimbabwe
Morocco v Uganda

Group C
All games in Bloemfontein, except Congo v Libya

Jan 13 Ghana v Congo
Libya v Ethiopia
Jan 17 Ghana v Libya
Ethiopia v Congo
Jan 21 Ethiopia v Ghana
Congo v Libya (Polokwane)

Group D
All games in Polokwane, except Mauritania v Gabon

Jan 14 DR Congo v Mauritania
Gabon v Burundi
Jan 18 DR Congo v Gabon
Burundi v Mauritania
Jan 22 Burundi v DR Congo
Mauritania v Gabon (Bloemfontein)

Top 2 in each group qualify for quarter-finals

Quarter-finals
Jan 25 Gp A 1st v Gp B 2nd (Cape Town) (25)
Gp B 1st v Gp A 2nd (Cape Town) (26)
Jan 26 Gp C 1st v Gp D 2nd (Bloem'tein) (27)
Gp D 1st v Gp C 2nd (Polokwane) (28)

Semi-finals
Jan 29 25 v 28 winners (Bloemfontein)
27 v 26 winners (Bloemfontein)

3rd-place match
Feb 1 (Cape Town)

Final
Feb 1 (Cape Town)

Previous winners

2009	DR Congo
2011	Tunisia

UNDER-17 WORLD CUP

To be staged in the UAE, Oct-Nov 2013

Match schedule

Group A
All games in Abu Dhabi, except Honduras v Brazil

Oct 17 Brazil v Slovakia
UAE v Honduras
Oct 20 Slovakia v Honduras
UAE v Brazil
Oct 23 Slovakia v UAE
Honduras v Brazil (Ras Al Khaimah)

Group B
All games in Ras Al Khaimah, except New Zealand v Ivory Coast

Oct 17 Uruguay v New Zealand
Ivory Coast v Italy
Oct 20 Uruguay v Ivory Coast
Italy v New Zealand
Oct 23 New Zealand v Ivory Coast (Abu Dhabi)
Italy v Uruguay

Group C
All games in Fujairah, except Morocco v Panama

Oct 18 Croatia v Morocco
Panama v Uzbekistan
Oct 21 Croatia v Panama
Uzbekistan v Morocco
Oct 24 Uzbekistan v Croatia
Morocco v Panama (Sharjah)

Group D
All games in Sharjah, except Venezuela v Russia

Oct 18 Tunisia v Venezuela
Russia v Japan
Oct 21 Tunisia v Russia
Japan v Venezuela
Oct 24 Venezuela v Russia (Fujairah)
Japan v Tunisia

Group E
All games in Dubai, except Austria v Iran

Oct 19 Canada v Austria
Iran v Argentina
Oct 22 Canada v Iran
Argentina v Austria
Oct 25 Argentina v Canada
Austria v Iran (Al Ain City)

Group F
All games in Al Ain City, except Nigeria v Iraq

Oct 19 Mexico v Nigeria
Iraq v Sweden
Oct 22 Mexico v Iraq
Sweden v Nigeria
Oct 25 Nigeria v Iraq (Dubai)
Sweden v Mexico

Top 2 in each group and the 4 3rd-placed teams with the best record qualify for 1st knockout round

1st knockout round
Oct 28 Gp B 2nd v Gp F 2nd (Abu Dhabi) (37)
Gp D 1st v Gp B/E/F 3rd (Sharjah) (38)
Gp A 1st v Gp C/D/E 3rd (Abu Dhabi) (39)
Gp A 2nd v Gp C 2nd (Sharjah) (40)
Oct 29 Gp B 1st v Gp A/C/D 3rd (Ras Al K'mah) (41)
Gp C 1st v Gp A/B/F 3rd (Fujairah) (42)
Gp E 1st v Gp D 2nd (Dubai) (43)
Gp F 1st v Gp E 2nd (Al Ain City) (44)

Quarter-finals
Nov 1 39 v 37 winners (Dubai) (45)
40 v 38 winners (Al Ain City) (46)
Nov 2 41 v 44 winners (Sharjah) (47)
43 v 42 winners (Sharjah) (48)

Semi-finals
Nov 5 48 v 45 winners (Abu Dhabi)
46 v 47 winners (Dubai)

3rd-place match
Nov 8 (Abu Dhabi)

Final
Nov 8 (Abu Dhabi)

Previous winners

1985[1]	Nigeria
1987[1]	Soviet Union
1989[1]	Saudi Arabia
1991	Ghana
1993	Nigeria
1995	Ghana
1997	Brazil
1999	Brazil
2001	France
2003	Brazil
2005	Mexico
2007	Nigeria
2009	Switzerland
2011	Mexico

[1]Age limit was 16 for the 1985, 1987 and 1989 tournaments

ESM TEAM OF THE MONTH SEPTEMBER 2013

European Sports Media

HOW IT WORKS

Every month, journalists from each member of the European Sports Media group select their first XI based on the best individual performances from Europe's top competitions. For details of how each ESM member voted, visit www.worldsoccer.com

ESM – EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA

The members of ESM are:

A Bola (Portugal)
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So Foot (France)
Sport (Belgium)
Sport Express (Russia)
De Telegraaf (Holland)
TIPSbladet (Denmark)
World Soccer (England)

More details of votes at worldsoccer.com

SEASON RANKINGS

Cumulative votes through the season

GOALKEEPERS

Victor Valdes (Barcelona)	3
Hugo Lloris (Tottenham Hotspur)	2
Manuel Neuer (Bayern Munich)	2
Artur Boruc (Southampton)	1
Thibaut Courtois (Atletico Madrid)	1
Samir Handanovic (Internazionale)	1
Pepe Reina (Napoli)	1

DEFENDERS

David Alaba (Bayern Munich)	5
Gerard Pique (Barcelona)	5
Federico Balzaretti (Roma)	4
Mehdi Benatia (Roma)	4
Mats Hummels (Borussia Dortmund)	3
Marquinhos (Paris Saint-Germain)	3
Leighton Baines (Everton)	2
Jerome Boateng (Bayern Munich)	2
Dante (Bayern Munich)	2
Fabinho (Monaco)	2
Per Mertesacker (Arsenal)	2
Daniel Alves (Barcelona)	1
Paolo Cannavaro (Napoli)	1
Diego Godin (Atletico Madrid)	1
Laurent Koscielny (Arsenal)	1
Layvin Kurzawa (Monaco)	1
Filipe Luis (Atletico Madrid)	1
Maicon (Roma)	1
Marcelo (Real Madrid)	1
Miranda (Atletico Madrid)	1
Andrea Ranocchia (Internazionale)	1
Bacary Sagna (Arsenal)	1
Kyle Walker (Tottenham Hotspur)	1

MIDFIELDERS

Aaron Ramsey (Arsenal)	8
Isco (Real Madrid)	4
Marco Reus (Borussia Dortmund)	4
Mesut Ozil (Arsenal)	3
Yaya Toure (Manchester City)	3
Philipp Lahm (Bayern Munich)	2
Paul Pogba (Juventus)	2
Franck Ribery (Bayern Munich)	2
Christian Eriksen (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Cesc Fabregas (Barcelona)	1
Marek Hamsik (Napoli)	1
Koke (Atletico Madrid)	1
Henrikh Mkhitaryan (Borussia Dortmund)	1
Jack Wilshere (Arsenal)	1
Marco Verratti (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Arturo Vidal (Juventus)	1

FORWARDS

Lionel Messi (Barcelona)	10
Diego Costa (Atletico Madrid)	9
Radamel Falcao (Monaco)	5
Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid)	4
Francesco Totti (Roma)	3
Ricardo Alvarez (Internazionale)	1
Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Robert Lewandowski (Borussia Dortmund)	1
Pedro (Barcelona)	1
Wayne Rooney (Manchester United)	1
Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool)	1
Luis Suarez (Liverpool)	1

SOCCERWAY
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ANDORRA

Champs' Super start

Back-to-back league champions Lusitanos warmed up for the start of the new Primera Divisio season with a 1-0 victory over UE Santa Coloma in the Andorran Super Cup.

Cristian Martinez scored the only goal of the game at the Estadi Comunal d'Andorra la Vella.

ARMENIA

Shirak's revenge

Three days after losing 2-0 to league leaders Pyunik, Shirak beat last season's double winners by the same score in the Armenian Super Cup.

BELGIUM

Third youngest

Anderlecht's defensive midfielder Youri Tielemans became the third-youngest player to appear in the Champions League when he started in the 3-0 loss to Olympiakos at the age of 16 years and 148 days.

Despite conceding a goal in the league for the first time this term – and ending a run of 512 minutes that stretched back four months to last season – Standard Liege recorded

Youngster...Tielemans (right) makes his Champions League debut

Club Results

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Sep 17

Manchester United (Eng) 4 (Rooney 22, 70, Van Persie 59, Valencia 79)
Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) 2 (Rolfes 54, Toprak 88)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 75,811. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
Man Utd: De Gea - Smalling, Ferdinand, Vidic, Evra, Carrick, Fellaini (Cleverley 80), Valencia, Kagawa (Young 71), Van Persie, Rooney (Hernandez 84).
Leverkusen: Leno - Donati, Toprak, Spahic, Boenisch, Reinartz, Can, Rolfes, Sam (Kruse 78), Son (Bender 64), Kiessling (Derdiyok 78).

Sep 17

Real Sociedad (Spa) 0
Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr) 2 (Alex Teixeira 65, 87)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 27,902. **Ref:** Hategan (Rom)
Sociedad: Bravo - Estrada, Mikel Gonzalez, Inigo Martinez, De la Bella, Bergara, Vela, Xabi Prieto, Ruben Pardo (Granero 81), Griezmann (Castro 74), Seferovic (Agirretxe 69).
Shakhtar: Pyatov - Srna, Kucher, Rakitskyi, Shevchuk, Fernando (Fred 87), Hubschman (Stepanenko 66), Douglas Costa (Bernard 77), Alex Teixeira, Taison, Luiz Adriano.

Oct 2

Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Rolfes 45+1, Hegeler 90+2)
Real Sociedad 1 (Vela 52)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 27,462. **Ref:** Karasev (Rus)
Leverkusen: Leno - Hilbert, Wollscheid, Toprak, Boenisch (Can 69), Reinartz, Bender, Rolfes, Sam (Hegeler 85), Son (Kruse 68), Kiessling.
Sociedad: Bravo - Carlos Martinez, Mikel Gonzalez, Inigo Martinez, De la Bella, Bergara, Elustondo, Zurutuza (Javi Ros 90), Vela, Griezmann (Castro 84), Seferovic (Agirretxe 68).

Oct 2

Shakhtar Donetsk 1 (Taison 76)
Manchester United 1 (Welbeck 18)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 51,555. **Ref:** Kralovec (CzR)
Shakhtar: Pyatov - Srna, Kucher, Rakitskyi, Shevchuk, Fernando (Ilsinho 84), Hubschman, Taison (Bernard 90+1), Alex Teixeira, Douglas Costa, Luiz Adriano (Ferreyra 89).
Man Utd: De Gea - Rafael, Smalling, Vidic, Evra, Valencia, Carrick, Fellaini (Giggs 66), Cleverley, Welbeck (Jones 90+2), Van Persie.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man United	2	1	1	0	5	3	4
Shakhtar	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Leverkusen	2	1	0	1	4	5	3
Sociedad	2	0	0	2	1	4	0

Group B

Sep 17

Copenhagen (Den) 1 (Jorgensen 14)
Juventus (Ita) 1 (Quagliarella 54)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 36,524. **Ref:** Bebek (Cro)
Copenhagen: Wiland - Jacobsen, Sigurdsson, Mellberg, Bengtsson, Claudemir (Margreitter 86), Delaney, Adi (Gislason 70), Braaten, Bolanos (Toutouh 79), Jorgensen.
Juventus: Buffon - Bonucci, Ogbonna, Chiellini, Lichtsteiner (Isla 86), Vidal, Pirlo, Pogba, Peluso (De Ceglie 73), Quagliarella (Giovinco 76), Tevez.

Sep 17

Galatasaray (Tur) 1 (Umut 84)
Real Madrid (Spa) 6 (Isco 33, Benzema 54, 81, Cristiano Ronaldo 63, 66, 90+1)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 47,669. **Ref:** Clattenburg (Eng)
Galatasaray: Muslera - Eboue, Chedjou, Nounkeu, Riera, Selcuk, Felipe Melo, Engin (Bruma 62), Sneijder, Burak (Umut 78), Drogba (Amrabat 46).
Real Madrid: Casillas (Diego Lopez 15) - Carvajal, Pepe, Sergio Ramos, Arbeloa, Khedira, Modric (Illarramendi 72), Di Maria, Isco (Bale 64), Cristiano Ronaldo, Benzema.

Oct 2

Juventus 2 (Vidal pen 78, Quagliarella 87)
Galatasaray 2 (Drogba 36, Umut 88)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 33,466. **Ref:** Kassai (Hun)
Juventus: Buffon - Barzagli, Bonucci (Llorente 68), Chiellini, Lichtsteiner (Isla 46), Pirlo, Asamoah, Vidal, Pogba, Tevez, Vucinic (Quagliarella 26).
Galatasaray: Muslera - Eboue, Semih (Gokhan 25), Chedjou, Riera (Amrabat 60), Felipe Melo, Selcuk, Hakan, Sneijder (Umut 74), Bruma, Drogba.

Oct 2

Real Madrid 4 (Cristiano Ronaldo 21, 65, Di Maria 71, 90+1)
Copenhagen 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 69,347. **Ref:** Jug (Sln)
Real Madrid: Casillas - Carvajal, Pepe, Varane, Marcelo, Modric (Isco 67), Khedira (Morata 74), Di Maria, Illarramendi, Benzema (Jese 81), Cristiano Ronaldo.
Copenhagen: Wiland - Jacobsen, Mellberg, Sigurdsson, Bengtsson, Gislason, Delaney, Claudemir, Toutouh (Bolanos 63), Braaten (Adi 66), Jorgensen (Kristensen 73).

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	2	2	0	0	10	1	6
Juventus	2	0	2	0	3	3	2
Copenhagen	2	0	1	1	1	5	1
Galatasaray	2	0	1	1	3	8	1

Group C

Sep 17

Benfica (Por) 2 (Djuricic 4, Luisao 30)
Anderlecht (Blg) 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 29,393. **Ref:** Grafe (Ger)
Benfica: Artur - Andre Almeida, Luisao, Garay, Siqueira, Perez (John 69), Fejsa, Matic, Djuricic (Pereira 75), Cardozo (Lima 87), Markovic.
Anderlecht: Proto - Gillet, Kouyate, Mbemba, N'Sakala, Kljestan, Milivojevic, Bruno (Praet 79), De Zeeuw (Acheampong 46), Suarez, Mitrovic (Cyriac 76).

Sep 17

Olympiakos (Gre) 1 (Weiss 25)
Paris Saint-Germain (Fra) 4 (Cavani 19, Thiago Motta 68, 73, Marquinhos 86)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 31,253. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
Olympiakos: Roberto - Maniatis, Medjani, Siovas, Bong, Samaris, Paulo Machado, David Fuster (Saviola 74), Dominguez (Campbell 60), Weiss (Yatabare 84), Mitroglou.
PSG: Sirigu - Van der Wiel, Marquinhos, Thiago Silva, Maxwell, Lucas Moura (Lavezzi 46), Thiago Motta, Verratti (Rabiot 79), Matuidi, Cavani (Menez 90), Ibrahimovic.

Oct 2

Anderlecht 0
Olympiakos 3 (Mitroglou 17, 56, 72)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,918. **Ref:** Hagen (Nor)
Anderlecht: Kaminski - Gillet, Kouyate, Nuytinck, N'Sakala, Tielemans, Kljestan, Bruno, Praet (Acheampong 74), Suarez, Mitrovic.
Olympiakos: Roberto - Maniatis, Manolas, Siovas, Bong, N'Dinga, Samaris, Olaitan (David Fuster 57), Saviola (Dominguez 66; Holebas 78), Weiss, Mitroglou.

Oct 2

Paris Saint-Germain 3 (Ibrahimovic 5, 30, Marquinhos 25)
Benfica 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 44,732. **Ref:** Rizzoli (Ita)
PSG: Sirigu - Van der Wiel, Alex (Camara 78), Marquinhos, Maxwell, Thiago Motta, Verratti (Rabiot 70), Matuidi, Cavani, Lavezzi (Lucas Moura 70), Ibrahimovic.
Benfica: Artur - Andre Almeida, Luisao, Garay, Siqueira, Fejsa (Andre Gomes 29), Matic, Perez, Djuricic (Markovic 46), Gaitan (Sulejmani 66), Cardozo.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSG	2	2	0	0	7	1	6
Olympiakos	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Benfica	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Anderlecht	2	0	0	2	0	5	0

Group D

Sep 17

Bayern Munich (Ger) 3 (Alaba 4, Mandzukic 41, Robben 68)
CSKA Moscow (Rus) 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 68,000. **Ref:** Rocchi (Ita)
Bayern: Neuer - Rafinha, Boateng, Dante, Alaba, Lahm, Robben (Shaqiri 79), Muller, Kroos (Schweinsteiger 71), Ribery, Mandzukic (Pizarro 75).
CSKA: Akinfeev - Nababkin, V Berezutsky, Ignashevich, Schennikov, Wernbloom, Cauna, Zuber (Milanov 77), Honda, Vitinho (Tosic 46), Musa (Bazelyuk 74).

Sep 17

Viktoria Plzen (CzR) 0
Manchester City (Eng) 3 (Dzeko 48, Toure 53, Aguero 58)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 11,281. **Ref:** Tagliavento (Ita)
Plzen: Kozacik - Rajtoral, Hejda (Hubnik 67), Prochazka, Limbersky, Horava, Horvath, Petrzela, Kolar (Duris 61), Kovarik, Bakos (Tecl 84).
Man City: Hart - Zabaleta, Kompany, Nastasic, Kolarov, Fernandinho, Jesus Navas (Milner 67), Toure (Javi Garcia 80), Nasri, Dzeko (Negredo 83), Aguero.

Oct 2

CSKA Moscow 3 (Tosic 19, Honda 29, Reznik og 79)
Viktoria Plzen 2 (Rajtoral 4, Bakos 90+1)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Nijhuis (Hol)
CSKA: Akinfeev - Nababkin, A Berezutsky, Ignashevich, Schennikov, Wernbloom, Elm (Milanov 73), Tosic, Honda, Zuber (Gonzalez 63), Musa (Vitinho 89).
Plzen: Kozacik - Rajtoral, Hubnik, Prochazka, Reznik (Pospisil 84), Horvath, Horava (Duris 77), Petrzela, Kolar, Kovarik (Tecl 70), Bakos.

Oct 2

Manchester City 1 (Negredo 79)
Bayern Munich 3 (Ribery 7, Muller 56, Robben 59)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 45,021. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)
Man City: Hart - Richards, Kompany, Nastasic, Clichy, Toure, Fernandinho, Jesus Navas, Nasri (Milner 70), Aguero (Silva 70), Dzeko (Negredo 57).
Bayern: Neuer - Rafinha, Boateng, Dante, Alaba, Lahm, Robben (Shaqiri 78), Schweinsteiger (Kirchhoff 76), Kroos, Ribery (Gotze 85), Muller.
Sent off: Boateng 86min.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern	2	2	0	0	6	1	6
Man City	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
CSKA	2	1	0	1	3	5	3
Plzen	2	0	0	2	2	6	0

Group E

Sep 18

Chelsea (Eng) 1 (Oscar 45)
Basle (Swi) 2 (Salah 71, Streller 81)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 40,358. **Ref:** Orsato (Ita)
Chelsea: Cech - Ivanovic, Cahill, David Luiz, Cole, Van Ginkel (Mikel 76), Lampard (Ba 76), Hazard, Oscar, Willian (Mata 67), Eto'o.
Basle: Sommer - Voser, Schar, Ivanov, Safari, Salah (Xhaka 88), Diaz, Frei, Stocker (Ajeti 81), Sio (Delgado 64), Streller.

Sep 18

Schalke (Ger) 3 (Uchida 67, Boateng 78, Draxler 85)
Steaua Bucharest (Rom) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 49,358. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)
Schalke: Hildebrand - Uchida, Howedes, Matip, Aogo, Hoger (Goretzka 88), Neustadter, Farfan (Clemens 89), Boateng, Draxler, Szalai (Fuchs 82).
Steaua: Tatarusanu - Georgievski, Szukala, Gardos, Latovlevici, Bourceanu, Pintilii, Popa, Stanciu (Leandro Tatu 60; Cristea 73), Tanase, Kapetanos (Piovaccari 64).

Oct 1

Basle 0
Schalke 1 (Draxler 54)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 33,251. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco (Spa)
Basle: Sommer - Voser, Schar, Ivanov, Safari (Delgado 84), Frei (P Degen 84), Diaz, Xhaka (Sio 62), Salah, Stocker, Streller.
Schalke: Hildebrand - Uchida, Howedes, Felipe Santana, Aogo (Kolasinac 78), Hoger, Neustadter, Farfan (Szalai 45), Meyer (Hoogland 85), Draxler, Boateng.

Oct 1

Steaua Bucharest 0
Chelsea 4 (Ramires 20, 55, Georgievski og 44, Lampard 90)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 36,713. **Ref:** Velasco Carballo (Spa)
Steaua: Tatarusanu - Georgievski (Fernando Varela 71), Szukala, Gardos, Latovlevici, Bourceanu, Filip, Popa (Leandro Tatu 46), Stanciu, Tanase, Piovaccari (Kapetanos 46).
Chelsea: Cech - Ivanovic, Terry, David Luiz, Cole, Ramires, Oscar (Azpilicueta 78), Lampard, Mata (Willian 80), Schurrle, Fernando Torres (Eto'o 11).

a 13th straight victory in all competitions this season with a 4-2 win against Oostende. Standard's 19-year-old striker Michy Batshuayi secured the points with the first hat-trick of his professional career.

Standard did, however, lose next time out, going down 2-1 at home to Esbjerg of Denmark in the Europa League.

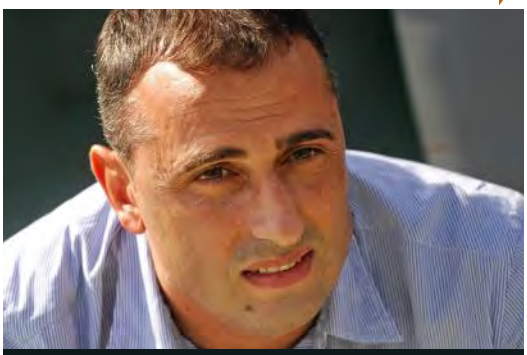
BULGARIA

Fans attack coach

Ivaylo Petev, who replaced Slavisa Jokanovic, quit as coach of Levski Sofia after he was attacked at a press conference by fans who accused him of supporting rivals CSKA.

After the incident, Levski's sporting director Nasko Sirakov, who is the club's all-time leading scorer with 206 goals, also resigned, saying: "I will not stand here any longer. This is not my Levski and it's not our audience.

Neftochimic coach Atanas Atanasov also left his job after a day. The club, who were promoted last season, parted company with the 44-year-old due to "different views and concepts for the development of the team".



Not wanted...Petev was hounded out by Levski Sofia supporters

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Schalke	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Basle	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Chelsea	2	1	0	1	5	2	3
Steaua	2	0	0	2	0	7	0

Group F

Sep 18
Marseille (Fra) 1 (J Ayew pen 90+3)
Arsenal (Eng) 2 (Walcott 65, Ramsey 83)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 38,380. **Ref:** Benquerenca (Por)
Marseille: Mandanda - Fanni, Nkoulou, Lucas Mendes, Morel, Romao, Imbula (Thauvin 80), Payet (J Ayew 73), Valbuena (Khelifa 90), A Ayew, Gignac.
Arsenal: Szczesny - Sagna, Mertesacker, Koscielny, Gibbs, Flamini (Miyaichi 90+1), Ramsey, Walcott (Monreal 78), Wilshere, Ozil, Giroud.

Sep 18
Napoli (Ita) 2 (Higuain 29, Insigne 67)
Borussia Dortmund (Ger) 1 (Zuniga og 87)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 55,766. **Ref:** Proenca (Por)
Napoli: Reina - Maggio, Albiol, Britos, Zuniga, Behrami, Inler, Callejon, Hamsik (Mesto 90+2), Insigne (Mertens 73), Higuain (Pandev 78).
Dortmund: Weidenfeller - Grosskreutz, Subotic, Hummels (Aubameyang 45+1), Schmelzer, Bender, Sahin, Blaszczykowski (Langerak 45+3), Mkhitaryan (Hofmann 76), Reus, Lewandowski.
Sent off: Weidenfeller 45+1min.

Oct 1
Arsenal 2 (Ozil 8, Giroud 15)
Napoli 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 59,536. **Ref:** Mazic (Ser)
Arsenal: Szczesny - Sagna, Mertesacker, Koscielny, Gibbs, Flamini, Arteta, Ramsey (Monreal 88), Rosicky (Wilshere 63), Ozil, Giroud.
Napoli: Reina - Mesto, Albiol (Fernandez 83), Britos, Zuniga, Behrami, Inler, Callejon (Zapata 77), Hamsik, Insigne, Pandev (Mertens 61).

Oct 1
Borussia Dortmund 3 (Lewandowski 19, pen 80, Reus 52)
Marseille 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 65,829. **Ref:** Fernandez Borbalan (Spa)
Dortmund: Langerak - Grosskreutz, Subotic, Hummels, Durm, Bender, Sahin, Reus (Hofmann 82), Mkhitaryan (Papastathopoulos 88), Aubameyang (Blaszczykowski 71), Lewandowski.
Marseille: Mandanda - Fanni, Nkoulou, Lucas Mendes, Mendy, Romao, Imbula, Payet (Lemina 73), Valbuena (J Ayew 81), A Ayew, Khelifa (Thauvin 81).

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Napoli	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Dortmund	2	1	0	1	4	2	3
Marseille	2	0	0	2	1	5	0

Group G

Sep 18
Atletico Madrid (Spa) 3 (Miranda 40, Arda 64, Leo Baptistao 80)
Zenit St Petersburg (Rus) 1 (Hulk 58)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 33,855. **Ref:** Collum (Sco)
Atletico: Courtois - Juanfran, Miranda, Godin, Filipe Luis, Mario Suarez, Gabi, Koke (Rodriguez 89), Adrian (Leo Baptistao 79), Arda (Raul Garcia 86), Villa.
Zenit: Lodygin - Lombaerts, Neto (Shatov 46), Hubocan, Smolnikov, Zyryanov (Arshavin 74), Witsel, Ansaldi, Hulk (Bystrov 85), Kerzhakov, Danny.

Sep 18
Austria Vienna (Aut) 0
Porto (Por) 1 (Gonzalez 55)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 37,500. **Ref:** Thomson (Sco)
Austria: Lindner - Koch, Rogulj, Ortlechner, Suttner, Holland (Okotie 84), Stankovic, Mader, Royer, Hosiner (Kienast 84), Jun (Simkovic 68).
Porto: Helton - Danilo, Otamendi, Mangala, Alex Sandro, Josue, Gonzalez (Quintero 87), Fernando, Varela (Herrera 79), Martinez, Lica (Izmailov 67).

Oct 1
Porto 1 (Martinez 16)
Atletico Madrid 2 (Godin 58, Arda 86)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 33,989. **Ref:** Webb (Eng)
Porto: Helton - Danilo, Otamendi, Mangala (Ghilas 89), Alex Sandro, Fernando, Defour, Gonzalez (Quintero 68), Josue (Lica 60), Martinez, Varela.
Atletico: Courtois - Juanfran, Godin, Miranda, Filipe Luis, Gabi, Tiago, Raul Garcia (Oliver 79), Villa (Rodriguez 46), Arda, Leo Baptistao (Koke 74).

Oct 1
Zenit St Petersburg 0
Austria Vienna 0
Att: 18,785. **Ref:** Aytekin (Ger)
Zenit: Lodygin - Anyukov (Criscito 87), Hubocan, Lombaerts, Smolnikov, Fayzulin, Witsel, Shatov (Shirokov 49), Hulk, Kerzhakov (Arshavin 64), Danny. *Sent off: Witsel 44min.*
Austria: Lindner - Koch, Ramsebner, Ortlechner, Suttner, Holland, Mader, Royer (Murg 57), Simkovic, Leovac (Okotie 81), Hosiner (Kienast 90+3).

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Atletico	2	2	0	0	5	2	6
Porto	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Austria	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Zenit	2	0	1	1	1	3	1

Group H

Sep 18
Barcelona (Spa) 4 (Messi 22, 55, 75, Pique 69)
Ajax (Hol) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 79,412. **Ref:** Moen (Nor)
Barcelona: Valdes - Daniel Alves, Pique (Bartra 80), Mascherano, Adriano, Fabregas (Xavi 71), Busquets, Iniesta, Sanchez, Messi, Neymar (Pedro 72).
Ajax: Vermeer - Van Rhijn, Moisander (Van der Hoorn 73), Denswil, Blind (Schone 78), De Jong (Serero 59), Poulsen, Duarte, Boilesen, Sigthorsson, Bojan.

Sep 18
Milan (Ita) 2 (Izaguirre og 82, Muntari 86)
Celtic (Sco) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 54,623. **Ref:** Stark (Ger)
Milan: Abbiati - Zaccardo, Zapata, Mexes, Constant (Robinho 76), Muntari, De Jong, Nocerino, Birsa (Emanuelson 63), Matri (Poli 87), Balotelli.
Celtic: Forster - Van Dijk, Lustig, Ambrose, Izaguirre, Brown, Matthews (Boerrigter 75), Mulgrew (Biton 89), Commons (Pukki 77), Stokes, Samaras.

Oct 1
Ajax 1 (Denswil 90)
Milan 1 (Balotelli pen 90+4)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 51,692. **Ref:** Eriksson (Swe)
Ajax: Cillessen - Van Rhijn, Denswil, Moisander (Van der Hoorn 78), Blind, Poulsen, De Jong, Duarte (Schone 59), De Sa (Andersen 64), Fischer, Sigthorsson.
Milan: Abbiati - Abate, Zapata, Mexes, Constant, Montolivo, De Jong, Muntari, Poli (Emanuelson 84), Robinho (Matri 80), Balotelli.

Oct 1
Celtic 0
Barcelona 1 (Fabregas 76)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 58,128. **Ref:** Lannoy (Fra)
Celtic: Forster - Lustig (Forrest 70), Van Dijk, Ambrose, Izaguirre, Matthews, Brown, Mulgrew, Samaras, Commons (Pukki 87), Stokes (Kayal 70).
Sent off: Brown 59min.
Barcelona: Valdes - Daniel Alves, Pique, Bartra, Adriano, Busquets, Xavi, Iniesta (Song 89), Fabregas (Tello 78), Pedro (Sanchez 74), Neymar.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Milan	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Ajax	2	0	1	1	1	5	1
Celtic	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

Top 2 in each group qualify for 1st knockout round; 3rd-placed teams enter Europa League at 1st knockout round stage

EUROPA LEAGUE

Group A

Sep 19: St Gallen (Swi) 2 Kuban Krasnodar (Rus) 0; Valencia (Spa) 0 Swansea City (Wal) 3.
Oct 3: Kuban Krasnodar 0 Valencia 2; Swansea 1 St Gallen 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Swansea	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
St Gallen	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Valencia	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Kuban	2	0	0	2	0	4	0

Group B

Sep 19: Dinamo Zagreb (Cro) 1 Chornomorets (Ukr) 2; PSV Eindhoven (Hol) 0 Ludogorets (Bul) 2.
Oct 3: Chornomorets 0 PSV Eindhoven 2; Ludogorets 3 Dinamo Zagreb 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ludogorets	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
PSV	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Chornomorets	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Dinamo Zag'b	2	0	0	2	1	5	0

Group C

Sep 19: Salzburg (Aut) 4 Elfsborg (Swe) 0; Standard Liege (Blg) 1 Esbjerg (Den) 2.
Oct 3: Elfsborg 1 Standard Liege 1; Esbjerg 1 Salzburg 2.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salzburg	2	2	0	0	6	1	6
Esbjerg	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Standard	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Elfsborg	2	0	1	1	1	5	1

Group D

Sep 19: Maribor (Sln) 2 Rubin Kazan (Rus) 5; Zulte Waregem (Blg) 0 Wigan Athletic (Eng) 0.
Oct 3: Rubin Kazan 4 Zulte Waregem 0; Wigan Athletic 3 Maribor 1.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rubin	2	2	0	0	9	2	6
Wigan	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Z Waregem	2	0	1	1	0	4	1
Maribor	2	0	0	2	3	8	0

Group E

Sep 19: Fiorentina (Ita) 3 Pacos de Ferreira (Por) 0; Pandurii (Rom) 0 Dnipro (Ukr) 1.
Oct 3: Dnipro 1 Fiorentina 2; Pacos de Ferreira 1 Pandurii 1.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fiorentina	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Dnipro	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Pandurii	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Pacos Ferreira	2	0	1	1	1	4	1

Group F

Sep 19: Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger) 3 Bordeaux (Fra) 0; Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr) 0 APOEL (Cyp) 0.
Oct 3: APOEL 0 Eintracht Frankfurt 3; Bordeaux 1 Maccabi Tel Aviv 2.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Eintracht	2	2	0	0	6	0	6
M Tel Aviv	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
APOEL	2	0	1	1	0	3	1
Bordeaux	2	0	0	2	1	5	0

Group G

Sep 19: Dynamo Kiev (Ukr) 0 Genk (Blg) 1; Thun (Swi) 1 Rapid Vienna (Aut) 0.
Oct 3: Genk 2 Thun 1; Rapid Vienna 2 Dynamo Kiev 2.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Genk	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
Thun	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Dynamo Kiev	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Rapid	2	0	1	1	2	3	1

Group H

Sep 19: Estoril (Por) 1 Sevilla (Spa) 2; Freiburg (Ger) 2 Slovan Liberec (CzR) 2.
Oct 3: Sevilla 2 Freiburg 0; Slovan Liberec 2 Estoril 1.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sevilla	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Liberec	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Freiburg	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
Estoril	2	0	0	2	2	4	0

Group I

Sep 19: Betis (Spa) 0 Lyon (Fra) 0; Vitoria Guimaraes (Por) 4 Rijeka (Cro) 0.
Oct 3: Lyon 1 Vitoria Guimaraes 1; Rijeka 1 Betis 1.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guimaraes	2	1	1	0	5	1	4
Betis	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Lyon	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Rijeka	2	0	1	1	1	5	1

Group J

Sep 19: Apollon (Cyp) 1 Trabzonspor (Tur) 2; Lazio (Ita) 1 Legia Warsaw (Pol) 0.
Oct 3: Legia Warsaw 0 Apollon 1; Trabzonspor 3 Lazio 3.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP J

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lazio	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Trabzonspor	2	1	1	0	5	4	4
Apollon	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Legia	2	0	0	2	0	2	0

CROATIA

Behind closed doors

Dinamo Zagreb's home game against PSV in the Europa League on October 24 will be played behind closed doors as a UEFA punishment. The club were found guilty of racist behaviour by supporters and the throwing of missiles in the games away to Austria Vienna and at home to Sheriff in earlier rounds of the competition.

Off the mark...Mikel

CYPRUS

Top flight reduced

The Cypriot top flight will be cut from 14 to 12 teams next season. Four teams will now be relegated at the end of this season, instead of two, with two being promoted from the second tier.

ENGLAND

Youth League first

Sinan Bytyqi made history by scoring the first-ever goal in the UEFA Youth League as Manchester City Under-19s beat Viktoria Plzen 4-1.

City won in the Czech Republic with further goals from Marcos Lopes (two) and Devante Cole. Milos Kratochvil was on target for the hosts.

185 games it took Chelsea's John Obi Mikel to break his Premier League scoring duck

Group K

Sep 19: Sheriff (Mol) 0 Anzhi Makhachkala (Rus) 0; Tottenham Hotspur (Eng) 3 Tromso (Nor) 0.
Oct 3: Anzhi Makhachkala 0 Tottenham Hotspur 2; Tromso 1 Sheriff 1.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP K	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tottenham	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Sheriff	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Anzhi	2	0	1	1	0	2	1
Tromso	2	0	1	1	1	4	1

Group L

Sep 19: Maccabi Haifa (Isr) 0 AZ Alkmaar (Hol) 1; PAOK Salonika (Gre) 2 Shakhter Karagandy (Kaz) 1.
Oct 3: AZ Alkmaar 1 PAOK Salonika 1; Shakhter Karagandy 2 Maccabi Haifa 2.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP L	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PAOK	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
AZ	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
M Haifa	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Shakhter	2	0	1	1	3	4	1

Top 2 in each group qualify for 1st knockout round

AUSTRIA

Sep 14: Wacker 0 Rapid 4; Wiener Neustadt 1 Sturm 3; Wolfsberger 3 Admira 1; Austria 2 Grodig 3.
Sep 15: Ried 0 Salzburg 5.
Sep 21: Sturm 1 Austria 2; Admira 0 Wiener Neustadt 3; Grodig 3 Wacker 3.
Sep 22: Rapid 2 Ried 0; Salzburg 2 Wolfsberger 2.
Sep 28: Ried 4 Grodig 2; Sturm 1 Wacker 0; Rapid 2 Wolfsberger 4; Admira 1 Austria 0.
Sep 29: Salzburg 8 Wiener Neustadt 1.
Oct 5: Wolfsberger 1 Ried 1; Grodig 0 Sturm 1; Wacker 3 Admira 3.
Oct 6: Austria 1 Salzburg 2; W Neustadt 0 Rapid 0.

AUSTRIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salzburg	11	7	4	0	35	10	25
Ried	11	5	4	2	20	17	19
Grodig	11	5	2	4	26	24	17
Rapid	11	4	4	3	19	12	16
Austria	11	4	3	4	21	17	15
Sturm	11	4	3	4	16	17	15
W Neustadt	11	3	3	5	16	31	12
Wolfsberger	11	2	4	5	19	24	10
Wacker	11	1	7	3	16	21	10
Admira	11	2	2	7	11	26	8

36-round season (9x4); bottom team will be relegated

BELGIUM

Regular season

Sep 14: Anderlecht 5 Mechelen 0; Mons 1 Waasland-Beveren 1; Kortrijk 3 Gent 0; Lokeren 3 Cercle Brugge 0; OH Leuven 0 Charleroi 0; Club Brugge 4 Lierse 1.
Sep 15: Oostende 2 Standard 4; Genk 5 Zulte Waregem 2.
Sep 21: Lierse 2 Kortrijk 0; Mechelen 4 Mons 2; Charleroi 2 Cercle Brugge 0; Gent 1 Oostende 1.
Sep 22: Club Brugge 4 Anderlecht 0; Standard 2 Lokeren 1; Zulte Waregem 4 OH Leuven 2; Waasland-Beveren 0 Genk 0.
Sep 28: Lokeren 2 Zulte Waregem 4; Genk 1 Mechelen 0; Oostende 1 Charleroi 0; OH Leuven 1 Gent 1; Kortrijk 2 Waasland-Beveren 1; Mons 0 Club Brugge 1.
Sep 29: Anderlecht 2 Lierse 0; Cercle Brugge 0 Standard 5.
Oct 5: Club Brugge 1 OH Leuven 0; Charleroi 2 Lokeren 1; Mechelen 1 Cercle Brugge 2; Lierse 2 Mons 1; Waasland-Beveren 2 Oostende 0.
Oct 6: Anderlecht 0 Kortrijk 1; Zulte Waregem 1 Standard 0; Gent 1 Genk 2.

BELGIUM – REGULAR	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Standard	10	9	0	1	23	4	27
Club Brugge	10	8	2	0	20	6	26
Z Waregem	10	7	2	1	22	15	23
Genk	10	6	2	2	18	10	20
Anderlecht	10	6	0	4	28	15	18
Lokeren	10	5	1	4	20	17	16
Kortrijk	10	5	1	4	13	12	16
Gent	10	3	4	3	11	15	13
Charleroi	10	3	3	4	11	14	12
Lierse	10	3	2	5	9	15	11
Cercle Brugge	10	2	3	5	7	19	9
Mechelen	10	2	2	6	9	17	8
Waasland-B	10	1	5	4	7	11	8
OH Leuven	10	1	4	5	8	15	7
Oostende	10	1	3	6	7	17	6
Mons	10	0	2	8	7	18	2

30-round regular season (15x2); top 6 will form championship group, 7th to 14th will enter Europa League-place play-offs, 15th & 16th (bottom 2) will meet in the relegation play-off series (the loser going down automatically, the winner entering rel/prom play-offs)

CZECH REPUBLIC

Sep 13: Dukla 2 Brno 1; Liberec 1 Plzen 1.
Sep 14: Ostrava 1 Bohemians 1905 3; Slovacko 1 Pribram 1; Olomouc 4 Jihlava 3; Slavia 0 Mlada Boleslav 4.
Sep 15: Teplice 3 Jablonec 1.
Sep 16: Znojmo 0 Sparta 2.
Sep 20: Sparta 4 Slovacko 1.
Sep 21: Plzen 0 Dukla 0.
Sep 22: Ostrava 3 Liberec 0; Mlada Boleslav 3 Jihlava 1; Bohemians 1905 0 Olomouc 2; Brno 2 Znojmo 0; Jablonec 2 Slavia 1.
Sep 23: Pribram 0 Teplice 4.
Sep 27: Jihlava 1 Plzen 2.
Sep 28: Olomouc 2 Brno 0; Teplice 5 Bohemians 1905 1; Slovacko 2 Ostrava 2; Znojmo 2 Mlada Boleslav 0; Slavia 0 Sparta 2.
Sep 29: Liberec 1 Pribram 0.
Sep 30: Dukla 1 Jablonec 1.

CZECH REPUBLIC	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sparta	10	9	1	0	27	6	28
Plzen	10	7	3	0	23	7	24
Teplice	10	7	2	1	30	10	23
Liberec	10	7	1	2	11	10	22
M Boleslav	10	5	3	2	19	9	18
Jablonec	10	4	3	3	17	15	15
Dukla	10	3	5	2	13	8	14
Olomouc	10	4	2	4	18	19	14
Ostrava	10	3	2	5	12	24	11
Bohemians	10	3	1	6	11	22	10
Slovacko	10	2	3	5	13	19	9
Pribram	10	2	2	6	10	20	8
Brno	10	2	1	7	11	15	7
Jihlava	10	2	1	7	16	22	7
Slavia	10	2	1	7	8	23	7
Znojmo	10	1	3	6	8	18	6

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

DENMARK

Sep 13: SonderjyskE 1 AaB 3.
Sep 14: Copenhagen 1 Esbjerg 1.
Sep 15: AGF 0 Viborg 1; Vestsjaelland 2 Randers 0; Brondby 2 OB 1.**Sep 16:** Midtjylland 2 Nordsjaelland 1.
Sep 20: Randers 3 AaB 2.
Sep 21: Midtjylland 0 Viborg 0.
Sep 22: SonderjyskE 2 Nordsjaelland 0; AGF 1 Brondby 3; Copenhagen 2 OB 1.
Sep 23: Vestsjaelland 1 Esbjerg 3.
Sep 27: Viborg 2 Vestsjaelland 0.
Sep 28: Brondby 3 Copenhagen 2.
Sep 29: Esbjerg 4 SonderjyskE 1; AaB 0 AGF 0; OB 1 Midtjylland 1.
Sep 30: Nordsjaelland 1 Randers 0.
Oct 5: Randers 2 AGF 2.
Oct 6: Esbjerg 1 OB 3; AaB 3 Viborg 1; Copenhagen 2 SonderjyskE 1; Nordsjaelland 1 Brondby 1.
Oct 7: Midtjylland 2 Vestsjaelland 2.

DENMARK	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Midtjylland	11	6	5	0	20	10	23
AaB	11	5	3	3	17	13	18
Esbjerg	11	5	2	4	25	16	17
Viborg	11	4	4	3	18	17	16
AGF	11	4	3	4	18	19	15
OB	11	3	5	3	17	17	14
Vestsjaelland	11	3	5	3	12	14	14
Copenhagen	11	3	4	4	17	17	13
Brondby	11	3	4	4	15	18	13
Randers	11	3	4	4	15	18	13
SonderjyskE	11	3	2	6	11	18	11
Nordsjaelland	11	2	3	6	10	18	9

33-round season (11x3); bottom 2 will be relegated

ENGLAND

Saturday, September 14

Aston Villa 1 (Benteke 67)
Newcastle 2 (Ben Arfa 18, Gouffran 73) Att: 37,554

Everton 1 (Naismith 45+1)
Chelsea 0 Att: 36,034

Fulham 1 (Sidwell 22)
West Bromwich 1 (McAuley 90+2) Att: 25,560

Hull 1 (Davies 40)
Cardiff 1 (Whittingham 59) Att: 21,949

Manchester United 2 (Van Persie pen 45+1, Rooney 81)
Crystal Palace 0 Att: 75,170

Stoke 0
Manchester City 0 Att: 25,052

Sunderland 1 (Gardner pen 48)
Arsenal 3 (Giroud 11, Ramsey 67, 76) Att: 39,055

Tottenham 2 (Sigurdsson 28, 49)
Norwich 0 Att: 35,952

Sunday, September 15

Southampton 0
West Ham 0 Att: 28,794

Monday, September 16

Swansea 2 (Shelvey 2, Michu 64)
Liverpool 2 (Sturridge 4, Moses 36) Att: 20,752

Saturday, September 21

Chelsea 2 (Oscar 52, Mikel 84)
Fulham 0 Att: 41,608

Liverpool 0
Southampton 1 (Lovren 53) Att: 44,755

Newcastle 2 (Remy 10, 44)
Hull 3 (Brady 26, Elmohamady 48, Aluko 76) Att: 51,523

Norwich 0
Aston Villa 1 (Kozak 30) Att: 26,813

West Bromwich 3 (Sessegnon 20, Ridgewell 76, Amalfitano 90+3)
Sunderland 0 Att: 24,595

West Ham 2 (Morrison 31, Noble pen 76)
Everton 3 (Baines 62, 83, Lukaku 85) Att: 34,952

Sunday, September 22

Arsenal 3 (Ramsey 5, Mertesacker 36, Sagna 72)
Stoke 1 (Cameron 26) Att: 60,002

Cardiff 0
Tottenham 1 (Paulinho 90+3) Att: 27,815

Crystal Palace 0
Swansea 2 (Michu 2, Dyer 48) Att: 22,466

Manchester City 4 (Aguero 16, 47, Toure 45+1, Nasri 50)
Manchester United 1 (Rooney 87) Att: 47,156

Saturday, September 28

Aston Villa 3 (El Ahmadi 51, Bacuna 73, Weimann 75)
Manchester City 2 (Toure 45, Dzeko 56) Att: 34,063

Fulham 1 (Ruiz 45)
Cardiff 2 (Caulker 12, Mutch 90+2) Att: 23,020

Hull 1 (Brady pen 12)
West Ham 0 Att: 24,291

Manchester United 1 (Rooney 57)
West Bromwich 2 (Amalfitano 54, Berahino 67) Att: 75,042

Southampton 2 (Osvaldo 47, Lambert 49)
Crystal Palace 0 Att: 30,699

Swansea 1 (Davies 81)
Arsenal 2 (Gnabry 58, Ramsey 62) Att: 20,712

Tottenham 1 (Sigurdsson 19)
Chelsea 1 (Terry 65) Att: 35,857

Sunday, September 29

Stoke 0
Norwich 1 (Howson 34) Att: 26,184

Sunderland 1 (Giaccherini 52)
Liverpool 3 (Sturridge 28, Suarez 36, 89) Att: 41,415

Monday, September 30

Everton 3 (Lukaku 5, 37, Barkley 25)
Newcastle 2 (Cabaye 51, Remy 89) Att: 33,495

Saturday, October 5

Cardiff 1 (Odemwingie 58)
Newcastle 2 (Remy 30, 38) Att: 27,538

Fulham 1 (Bent 83)
Stoke 0 Att: 24,634

Hull 0
Aston Villa 0 Att: 24,396

Liverpool 3 (Suarez 13, Sturridge 17, Gerrard pen 38)
Crystal Palace 1 (Gayle 76) Att: 44,721

Manchester City 3 (Negredo 17, Aguero 45, Howard og 69)
Everton 1 (Lukaku 16) Att: 47,267

FINLAND

Five in a row for HJK

HJK secured their fifth successive league title with a 3-0 victory against Finnish Cup winners RoPS. It was a first title success for Sixten Bostrom, who replaced Antti Muurinen as coach of the club from Helsinki at the end of last season.

RoPS had beaten KuPS 2-1 in the Cup Final to win the trophy for a second time. Aleksandr Kokko scored twice after KuPS had MacPherlin Dudu sent off, while Jerry Voutilainen scored a consolation in injury time.

However, RoPS coach Kari Virtanen will not be around to lead the team in next term's Europa League campaign, having announced earlier this season that he would be stepping down, with Lahti coach Juha Malinen set to take over.

GERMANY

Hundred clean sheets

Bayern Munich goalkeeper Manuel Neuer kept his 100th clean sheet in the Bundesliga as his side beat Hanover 2-0. At 27, he is the youngest player to reach this particular century.

Unbeatable...Bayern goalkeeper Neuer keeps Hanover at bay

Sunderland 1 (Gardner 5)
Manchester United 2 (Januzaj 55, 61) Att: 45,426

Sunday, October 6
Norwich 1 (Pilkington 68)
Chelsea 3 (Oscar 4, Hazard 85, Willian 86)
Att: 26,840

Southampton 2 (Lallana 19, Rodriguez 83)
Swansea 0 Att: 28,570

Tottenham 0
West Ham 3 (Reid 66, Vaz Te 72, Morrison 79)
Att: 35,977

West Bromwich 1 (Yacob 42)
Arsenal 1 (Wilshere 63) Att: 24,839

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	7	5	1	1	14	8	16
Liverpool	7	5	1	1	11	5	16
Chelsea	7	4	2	1	10	4	14
Southampton	7	4	2	1	7	2	14
Man City	7	4	1	2	17	8	13
Tottenham	7	4	1	2	6	5	13
Everton	7	3	3	1	10	9	12
Hull	7	3	2	2	6	7	11
Man United	7	3	1	3	10	9	10
Aston Villa	7	3	1	3	9	8	10
Newcastle	7	3	1	3	9	12	10
West Brom	7	2	3	2	7	6	9
West Ham	7	2	2	3	7	5	8
Cardiff	7	2	2	3	7	9	8
Swansea	7	2	1	4	8	11	7
Stoke	7	2	1	4	4	7	7
Fulham	7	2	1	4	5	9	7
Norwich	7	2	1	4	5	9	7
Crystal Palace	7	1	0	6	5	13	3
Sunderland	7	0	1	6	5	16	1

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

Leading goalscorers
6 Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool)
5 Loic Remy (Newcastle)

FINLAND

FINNISH CUP

Final
Sep 28 - Helsinki (Sonera)
RoPS 2 (Kokko pen 78, 79)
KuPS 1 (Voutilainen 90+2)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,032. **Ref:** Munukka
Sent off: Dudu (KuPS) 52min

FRANCE

Friday, September 13
Bordeaux 0
Paris Saint-Germain 2 (Matuidi 30, Lucas Moura 64) Att: 29,548

Saturday, September 14
AC Ajaccio 2 (Lasne 81, Tallo 86)
Evian TG 3 (Dja Djedje 31, Berigaud 44, 52)
Att: 5,784

Guingamp 1 (Yatabare pen 88)
Bastia 1 (Khazri 47) Att: 13,084

Montpellier 0
Reims 0 Att: 11,667

Nantes 1 (Djordjevic 76)
Sochaux 0 Att: 22,864

Toulouse 1 (Ben Yedder 66)
Marseille 1 (Lucas Mendes 87) Att: 20,211

Valenciennes 1 (Melikson pen 80)
Saint-Etienne 3 (Corgnet 17, 53, Hamouma 47)
Att: 13,550

Sunday, September 15
Lille 0
Nice 2 (Cvitanich 20, 45) Att: 34,002

Lyon 0
Rennes 0 Att: 33,352

Monaco 1 (Falcao pen 6)
Lorient 0 Att: 8,186

Friday, September 20
Saint-Etienne 1 (Hamouma 18)
Toulouse 2 (Braithwaite 63, Sylla 75) Att: 26,527

Saturday, September 21
Bastia 0
Marseille 0 Att: 14,996

Evian TG 2 (Wass 74, Sougou 77)
Montpellier 2 (Montano 37, Cabella 52)
Att: 10,531

Reims 1 (De Preville 58)
Guingamp 1 (Weber og 5) Att: 15,366

Rennes 2 (Kadir 13, 16)
AC Ajaccio 0 Att: 14,865

Sochaux 0
Lille 2 (Roux 34, 37) Att: 10,511

Sunday, September 22
Lorient 3 (Aboubakar 23, Monnet-Paquet 44, Diallo 58)
Bordeaux 3 (Diabate pen 8, Sertic 24, Saivet 30)
Att: 15,038

Lyon 3 (Gomis 26, Grenier 55, Briand 72)
Nantes 1 (Veretout 24) Att: 33,861

Nice 4 (Cvitanich pen 32, Bautheac 44, Bruls 68, Bosetti 73)
Valenciennes 0 Att: 34,459

Paris Saint-Germain 1 (Ibrahimovic 5)
Monaco 1 (Falcao 20) Att: 45,416

Tuesday, September 24
Lille 3 (Kalou 12, Hansen og 32, Rodelin 71)
Evian TG 0 Att: 31,252

Marseille 2 (Mendy 22, Imbula 26)
Saint-Etienne 1 (Ghoulam pen 32) Att: 36,073

Wednesday, September 25
AC Ajaccio 2 (Arrache 18, Camara 70)
Lyon 1 (Malbranque 56) Att: 6,184

Bordeaux 0
Reims 0 Att: 13,282

Guingamp 5 (Mandanne 9, Beauvue 17, Atik 33, Sankhare 70, Langil 90+3)
Sochaux 1 (Bakambu 47) Att: 13,515

Monaco 3 (Riviere 39, Falcao 41, 89)
Bastia 0 Att: 7,643

Nantes 2 (Djordjevic 27, Aristeguieta 88)
Nice 0 Att: 22,290

Toulouse 1 (Braithwaite 71)
Lorient 0 Att: 15,097

Valenciennes 0
Paris Saint-Germain 1 (Cavani 45+2) Att: 19,180

Thursday, September 26
Montpellier 0
Rennes 0 Att: 12,592

Saturday, September 28
Evian TG 1 (Berigaud 25)
Bordeaux 1 (Diabate 69) Att: 9,846

Lorient 0
Marseille 2 (Valbuena 58, A Ayew 90+1)
Att: 15,340

Lyon 0
Lille 0 Att: 39,717

Nice 1 (Cvitanich 48)
Guingamp 0 Att: 21,314

Paris Saint-Germain 2 (Marquinhos 41, Cavani pen 79)
Toulouse 0 Att: 44,745

Saint-Etienne 2 (Tabanou 27, Diomande 57)
Bastia 2 (Bruno 85, Modesto 90+5) Att: 32,001

Sochaux 2 (Bakambu 12, Carlao 18)
Valenciennes 0 Att: 14,579

Sunday, September 29
AC Ajaccio 1 (Zubar 36)
Montpellier 1 (Cabella pen 10) Att: 6,185

Reims 1 (Devaux 4)
Monaco 1 (Joao Moutinho 13) Att: 20,032

Rennes 1 (Nelson Oliveira 55)
Nantes 3 (Djordjevic 17, Gakpe 42, Deaux 90+3)
Att: 28,717

Friday, October 4
Bastia 4 (Boudebouz 6, Khazri pen 23, Krasic 59, Romaric 80)
Lorient 1 (Coutadeur 31) Att: 12,373

Saturday, October 5
Guingamp 2 (Sorbon 47, Yatabare 69)
Rennes 0 Att: 16,780

Lille 3 (Souare 17, Gueye 57, Kalou 70)
AC Ajaccio 0 Att: 34,381

Monaco 2 (Ferreira Carrasco 15, Ocampos 87)
Saint-Etienne 1 (Hamouma 49) Att: 11,786

Nantes 3 (Djordjevic 2, 34, Djilobodji 65)
Evian TG 0 Att: 26,321

Toulouse 1 (Ben Yedder 34)
Nice 0 Att: 10,512

Valenciennes 1 (Enza Yamissi 90)
Reims 1 (Oniangue 30) Att: 20,330

Sunday, October 6
Bordeaux 4 (Saivet pen 21, Corchia og 38, Diabate 70, 89)
Sochaux 1 (Contout 17) Att: 12,823

Marseille 1 (A Ayew pen 34)
Paris Saint-Germain 2 (Maxwell 45, Ibrahimovic pen 66) Att: 44,391

Montpellier 5 (Montano 16, 68, Mounier 45, Cabella pen 59, 66)
Lyon 1 (Lacazette 47) Att: 14,547

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monaco	9	6	3	0	16	5	21
PSG	9	6	3	0	14	5	21
Lille	9	5	2	2	11	4	17
Marseille	9	5	2	2	13	7	17
Nantes	9	5	1	3	14	8	16
Nice	9	4	2	3	11	10	14
Saint-Etienne	9	4	1	4	12	11	13
Montpellier	9	2	6	1	14	12	12
Reims	9	2	6	1	7	6	12
Bastia	9	3	3	3	11	11	12
Rennes	9	3	3	3	8	9	12
Toulouse	9	3	3	3	7	10	12
Guingamp	9	3	2	4	12	10	11
Lyon	9	3	2	4	13	12	11
Bordeaux	9	2	4	3	11	12	10
Evian TG	9	2	3	4	10	17	9
AC Ajaccio	9	1	4	4	6	12	7
Lorient	9	2	1	6	7	15	7
Sochaux	9	1	2	6	7	18	5
Valenciennes	9	1	1	7	5	15	4

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

Leading goalscorers
7 Radamel Falcao (Monaco)
6 Kevin Berigaud (Evian TG)
6 Filip Djordjevic (Nantes)
6 Emmanuel Riviere (Monaco)

GERMANY

Friday, September 13
Hertha Berlin 0
Stuttgart 1 (Gentner 49) Att: 46,624

Saturday, September 14
Augsburg 2 (Altintop 62, Werner 89)
Freiburg 1 (Mehmedi 46) Att: 28,453

Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Sam 24, Kiessling 65, 90+2)
Wolfsburg 1 (Olic 39) Att: 27,149

Bayern Munich 2 (Mandzukic 51, Ribery 64)
Hanover 0 Att: 71,000

Borussia Dortmund 6 (Aubameyang 19, 65, Mkhitaryan 22, Lewandowski 73, 81, Reus 74)
Hamburg 2 (Lam 26, Westermann 49) Att: 80,645

Mainz 0
Schalke 1 (Boateng 34) Att: 34,000

Werder Bremen 0
Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (Kadlec 14, 34, Prodl og 77)
Att: 40,060

Sunday, September 15
Eintracht Braunschweig 1 (Elabdellaoui 70)
Nuremberg 1 (Hlousek 28) Att: 22,570

Hoffenheim 2 (Modeste 45, Volland 54)
Monchengladbach 1 (Hrgota 75) Att: 29,447

Friday, September 20
Monchengladbach 4 (Wendt 22, Raffael 31, 76, Kruse pen 72)
Eintracht Braunschweig 1 (Boland 58)
Att: 50,064

Saturday, September 21
Hamburg 0
Werder Bremen 2 (Petersen 32, 90+4) Att: 53,290

GIBRALTAR

European places

UEFA's newest member will get one place in each of the Champions League and Europa League qualifying competitions next season. The Gibraltar Premier League consists of eight teams – with one called Manchester United – and has been won by Lincoln for the past six years.

Equaliser...Salpingidis (right)

GREECE

Seven away wins

Dimitris Salpingidis' equaliser away to AZ in Alkmaar saw PAOK set a new Europa League record by going seven successive away games in the competition without defeat, eclipsing the previous best mark they shared with Atletico Madrid, Porto and Fenerbahce.

HOLLAND

Muhren tribute

In a fitting tribute to his uncle Gerrie Muhren, who had passed away six days earlier, Robert Muhren scored both goals for Volendam who lost 4-2 to Ajax in the Dutch Cup.

Muhren senior began his professional career with Volendam before joining Ajax and winning three

Critical...Adams

Hanover 2 (Sobiech 60, Huszti pen 89)
Augsburg 1 (Verhaegh pen 51) Att: 39,200

Mainz 1 (Malli 82)
Bayer Leverkusen 4 (Kruse 19, 45+1, Bender 38, Kiessling 59) Att: 28,617

Nuremberg 1 (Nilsson 51)
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Schmelzer 37) Att: 50,000

Schalke 0
Bayern Munich 4 (Schweinsteiger 21, Mandzukic 22, Ribery 75, Pizarro 84) Att: 61,973

Wolfsburg 2 (Olic 44, 48)
Hoffenheim 1 (Modeste 15) Att: 24,837

Sunday, September 22
Freiburg 1 (Mehmedi 6)
Hertha Berlin 1 (Skjelbred 38) Att: 23,200

Stuttgart 1 (Werner 16)
Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Russ 14) Att: 44,810

Friday, September 27
Augsburg 2 (Hahn 27, Milik 88)
Monchengladbach 2 (Kruse 33, Hrgota 71)
Att: 30,352

Saturday, September 28
Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Rolfes 23, Sam 37)
Hanover 0 Att: 25,198

Bayern Munich 1 (Muller 63)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 71,000

Borussia Dortmund 5 (Reus 35, pen 45+2, Lewandowski 58, 70, Blaszczykowski 79)
Freiburg 0 Att: 80,000

Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Flum 31, Russ 54)
Hamburg 2 (Lasogga 45+3, Jansen 86) Att: 50,700

Hertha Berlin 3 (Allagui 48, 73, Ben Hatira 74)
Mainz 1 (N Muller 8) Att: 40,969

Hoffenheim 3 (Modeste 16, Roberto Firmino pen 48, Abraham 61)
Schalke 3 (Boateng 3, Matip 13, Hoger 40)
Att: 29,139

Sunday, September 29
Eintracht Braunschweig 0
Stuttgart 4 (Ibisevic 40, Maxim 50, Traore 76, Harnik 86) Att: 22,760

Werder Bremen 3 (Dabanli og 8, Elia 34, 66)
Nuremberg 3 (Kiyotake 44, Drmic 53, Hlousek 70)
Att: 40,048

Friday, October 4
Hanover 1 (Schulz 23)
Hertha Berlin 1 (Ronny 81) Att: 46,500

Saturday, October 5
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Sam 31)
Bayern Munich 1 (Kroos 29) Att: 30,210

Mainz 2 (Choupo-Moting 82, Malli 90+2)
Hoffenheim 2 (Volland 14, Roberto Firmino 22)
Att: 25,187

Monchengladbach 2 (Kruse pen 82, Raffael 86)
Borussia Dortmund 0 Att: 54,010

Schalke 4 (Boateng pen 16, Szalai 28, 78, Meyer 86)
Augsburg 1 (Molders 10) Att: 60,731

Stuttgart 1 (Harnik 6)
Werder Bremen 1 (Petersen 37) Att: 50,410

Wolfsburg 0
Eintracht Braunschweig 2 (Bellarabi 31, Kumbela 86) Att: 30,000

Sunday, October 6
Freiburg 1 (Hofler 85)
Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Gunter og 64) Att: 23,300

Nuremberg 0
Hamburg 5 (Van der Vaart 17, Lasogga 59, 63, 67, Arslan 74) Att: 38,042

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern	8	6	2	0	15	3	20
Dortmund	8	6	1	1	21	7	19
Leverkusen	8	6	1	1	18	8	19
M'gladbach	8	4	1	3	19	13	13
Hanover	8	4	1	3	11	11	13
Hertha	8	3	3	2	14	9	12
Stuttgart	8	3	2	3	16	10	11
Schalke	8	3	2	3	14	17	11
Werder	8	3	2	3	9	12	11
Hoffenheim	8	2	4	2	20	20	10
Mainz	8	3	1	4	12	17	10
Augsburg	8	3	1	4	9	15	10
Frankfurt	8	2	3	3	11	13	9
Wolfsburg	8	3	0	5	9	11	9
Hamburg	8	2	2	4	17	19	8
Nuremberg	8	0	5	3	9	17	5
Freiburg	8	0	4	4	9	18	4
Braunschweig	8	1	1	6	5	18	4

34-round season (17x2); bottom 2 will be relegated, 3rd bottom will enter rel/prom play-off

Leading goalscorers
6 Vedad Ibisevic (Stuttgart)
6 Robert Lewandowski (Borussia Dortmund)
6 Anthony Modeste (Hoffenheim)
6 Nicolai Muller (Mainz)
6 Sidney Sam (Bayer Leverkusen)

GREECE

Sep 14: Panetolikos 0 Ergotelis 0; Veria 1 PAOK 2; Olympiakos 4 Xanthi 0.
Sep 15: Aris 1 Levadiakos 1; Panionios 1 Panthrakikos 1; OFI 1 Asteras 1; Apollon 1 Kalloni 3; Platanias 1 Panathinaikos 1.
Sep 16: Giannina 1 Atromitos 0.
Sep 21: Asteras 2 Kalloni 0; Atromitos 2 Apollon 0; Panathinaikos 1 OFI 0.
Sep 22: PAOK 1 Platanias 0; Levadiakos 1 Giannina 0; Panthrakikos 1 Veria 0; Ergotelis 1 Panionios 1; Panetolikos 0 Olympiakos 0.
Sep 23: Xanthi 2 Aris 0.
Sep 28: Veria 0 Ergotelis 1; Panionios 0 Olympiakos 2.
Sep 29: Aris 0 Panetolikos 0; OFI 1 PAOK 1; Apollon 4 Levadiakos 2; Giannina 2 Xanthi 1; Panathinaikos 2 Asteras 1.
Sep 30: Platanias 1 Panthrakikos 1; Kalloni 0 Atromitos 1.
Oct 5: Asteras 2 Atromitos 2; Ergotelis 3 Platanias 1; Panionios 1 Aris 2.
Oct 6: Olympiakos 6 Veria 0; Levadiakos 1 Kalloni 0; Panthrakikos 1 OFI 1; Xanthi 3 Apollon 2; PAOK 2 Panathinaikos 1.
Oct 7: Panetolikos 2 Giannina 0.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	7	6	1	0	20	1	19
PAOK	7	5	1	1	13	6	16
Ergotelis	7	3	4	0	9	4	13
Atromitos	7	3	2	2	10	7	11
Panathinaikos	7	3	2	2	8	8	11
Giannina	7	3	1	3	8	8	10
Xanthi	7	3	1	3	7	11	10
Asteras	7	2	4	1	12	9	10
Panthrakikos	7	2	4	1	8	7	10
Panetolikos	7	2	3	2	5	4	9
Kalloni	7	3	0	4	6	6	9
Levadiakos	7	2	2	3	7	14	8
Apollon	7	2	0	5	9	15	6
Panionios	7	1	3	3	7	10	6
Veria	7	1	2	4	6	13	5
Platanias	7	0	5	2	6	9	5
OFI	7	0	5	2	3	6	5
Aris	7	1	2	4	4	10	5

34-round season (17x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

Leading goalscorer
9 Kostas Mitroglou (Olympiakos)

HOLLAND

Sep 14: Ajax 2 Zwolle 1; Cambuur 2 Heracles 0; Twente 2 PSV 2.
Sep 15: NEC 3 Feyenoord 3; Heerenveen 4 Groningen 2; AZ 3 Go Ahead Eagles 0; Roda JC 1 NAC 5; Utrecht 2 RKC 1.
Sep 20: Go Ahead Eagles 0 Cambuur 0.
Sep 21: Heracles 0 Twente 3; Den Haag 1 NEC 1; Groningen 4 RKC 1; Roda JC 3 Heerenveen 3.
Sep 22: Vitesse 3 Zwolle 0; Feyenoord 1 Utrecht 0; NAC 3 AZ 0; PSV 4 Ajax 0.
Sep 28: AZ 2 PSV 1; RKC 1 Heracles 4; Utrecht 3 Roda JC 3; Zwolle 0 NAC 0; Ajax 6 Go Ahead Eagles 0.
Sep 29: NEC 2 Vitesse 3; Heerenveen 2 Cambuur 1; Feyenoord 4 Den Haag 2; Twente 5 Groningen 0.
Oct 2: Den Haag 2 Vitesse 1.
Oct 4: Cambuur 0 Twente 1.
Oct 5: Roda JC 0 Zwolle 0; Go Ahead Eagles 4 NEC 3; NAC 2 Heracles 1.
Oct 6: Ajax 3 Utrecht 0; Vitesse 1 Feyenoord 2; Groningen 2 AZ 1; PSV 2 RKC 1.

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Twente	9	5	3	1	22	5	18
PSV	9	5	3	1	21	8	18
Ajax	9	5	2	2	22	13	17
Feyenoord	9	5	1	3	20	15	16
Heerenveen	8	4	3	1	21	16	15
Zwolle	9	4	3	2	14	9	15
Vitesse	9	4	2	3	16	13	14
Groningen	9	4	2	3	19	20	14
AZ	9	4	1	4	14	16	13
NAC	9	3	3	3	13	10	12
Go Ahead	9	3	3	3	14	21	12
Heracles	9	3	1	5	13	17	10
Roda JC	9	2	4	3	14	19	10
Cambuur	9	2	3	4	7	8	9
Utrecht	9	2	3	4	9	18	9
Den Haag	8	2	1	5	10	17	7
RKC	9	1	2	6	12	22	5
NEC	9	0	4	5	14	28	4

34-round season (17x2); bottom team will be relegated, 2nd & 3rd bottom will enter rel/prom play-offs

Leading goalscorers
10 Alfred Finnbogason (Heerenveen)
10 Graziano Pelle (Feyenoord)

ICELAND

ICELAND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
KR (C)	22	17	1	4	50	27	52
FH	22	14	5	3	47	22	47
Stjarnan	22	13	4	5	34	25	43
Breidablik	22	11	6	5	37	27	39
Valur	22	8	9	5	45	31	33
IBV	22	8	5	9	26	28	29
Fylkir	22	7	5	10	33	33	26
Thor	22	6	6	10	31	44	24
Keflavik	22	7	3	12	33	47	24
Fram	22	6	4	12	26	37	22
Vikingur O (R)	22	3	8	11	21	35	17
IA (R)	22	3	2	17	29	56	11

ITALY

Saturday, September 14
Internazionale 1 (Icardi 73)
Juventus 1 (Vidal 75) Att: 79,343

Napoli 2 (Higuain 71, Callejon 81)
Atalanta 0 Att: 38,821

Torino 2 (D'Ambrosio 48, Cerci 71)
Milan 2 (Muntari 88, Balotelli pen 90+5)
Att: 30,000

Sunday, September 15
Fiorentina 1 (Borja Valero 71)
Cagliari 1 (Pinilla 89) Att: 31,690

Lazio 3 (Candreva 8, Cavanda 39, Lulic 42)
Chievo 0 Att: 30,000

Livorno 2 (Paulinho 65, 72)
Catania 0 Att: 8,627

Sampdoria 0
Genoa 3 (Antonini 9, Calaio 50, Lodi 66) Att: 34,292

Udinese 1 (Di Natale 85)
Bologna 1 (Diamanti 71) Att: 11,000

Verona 2 (Martinho 12, Romulo 90+3)
Sassuolo 0 Att: 18,433

Monday, September 16
Parma 1 (Biabiany 39)
Roma 3 (Florenzi 47, Totti 70, Strootman pen 85)
Att: 13,118

Saturday, September 21
Cagliari 2 (Ekdal 26, Conti 90+1)
Sampdoria 2 (Gabbiadini 89, 90+3) Att: 300
Match played in Trieste

Chievo 2 (Pellissier 13, Rigoni 40)
Udinese 1 (Maicosuel 1) Att: 8,000

Genoa 0
Livorno 0 Att: 18,956

Sunday, September 22
Atalanta 0
Fiorentina 2 (Fernandez 41, Rossi 69) Att: 13,362

Bologna 1 (Natali 29)
Torino 2 (D'Ambrosio 2, Cerci pen 45+1)
Att: 21,658

Catania 0
Parma 0 Att: 13,125

successive European Cup Finals, from 1971–73.

HUNGARY

Adams' heart attack

Ferencvaros defender Akeem Adams was in a critical condition after suffering a heart attack following his side's 3-1 win over Ujpest.

The 22-year-old, who has eight caps for Trinidad & Tobago, was substituted during injury time and later taken to hospital after feeling dizzy.

"He is fighting for his life," confirmed the club's communications director Zoltan Vamos, who also said that the player had undergone medical examinations as required by FIFA and UEFA, and that no problems had been evident from his tests. Adams had made six appearances since joining Ferencvaros in July.

ICELAND

KR crowned champs

KR coach Runar Kristinsson's side clinched the Icelandic title in his 150th game in charge with a 2-1 win against Reykjavik rivals Valur.

KR have now stretched their record to 26 Icelandic championships, which is six more than the next-best haul of Valur.

ITALY

Not so Super Mario

After 21 successful spot-kicks, Mario Balotelli missed the first penalty of his career as Milan lost 2-1 at home to Napoli. The striker was also sent-off after the final whistle.

Missed...Balotelli

Juventus 2 (Tevez 40, Llorente 45+3)
Verona 1 (Cacciatore 36) Att: 38,789

Milan 1 (Balotelli 90+1)
Napoli 2 (Britos 6, Higuain 54) Att: 51,384

Roma 2 (Balzaretti 63, Ljajic pen 90+4)
Lazio 0 Att: 45,306

Sassuolo 0
Internazionale 7 (Palacio 7, Taider 23, Pucino og 33, Alvarez 53, Milito 63, 83, Cambiasso 75)
Att: 22,001

Tuesday, September 24
Udinese 1 (Di Natale 79)
Genoa 0 Att: 7,810

Wednesday, September 25
Bologna 3 (Laxalt 33, 52, Cristaldo 62)
Milan 3 (Poli 12, Robinho 89, Abate 90+2)
Att: 22,953

Chievo 1 (Thereau 28)
Juventus 2 (Quagliarella 47, Bernardini og 65)
Att: 20,000

Lazio 3 (Ederson 4, Lulic 39, Hernanes 90+4)
Catania 1 (Barrientos 6) Att: 27,140

Livorno 1 (Luci 23)
Cagliari 1 (Ibarbo 53) Att: 9,675

Napoli 1 (Dzemaili 14)
Sassuolo 1 (Zaza 20) Att: 55,677

Parma 4 (Mesbah 19, Parolo 28, 40, Rosi 35)
Atalanta 3 (Bonaventura 20, Denis 44, Livaja 79)
Att: 10,409

Sampdoria 0
Roma 2 (Benatia 65, Gervinho 88) Att: 21,398

Torino 2 (Cerci pen 36, 52)
Verona 2 (Gomez 44, Jorginho pen 67) Att: 13,178

Thursday, September 26
Internazionale 2 (Cambiasso 72, Jonathan 83)
Fiorentina 1 (Rossi pen 60) Att: 38,291

Saturday, September 28
Genoa 0
Napoli 2 (Pandev 14, 25) Att: 23,883

Milan 1 (Birsa 46)
Sampdoria 0 Att: 31,575

Sunday, September 29
Atalanta 2 (Denis 45, 63)
Udinese 0 Att: 10,543

Cagliari 1 (Nainggolan 83)
Internazionale 1 (Icardi 75) Att: 3,000
Match played in Trieste

Catania 2 (Plasil 22, Castro 54)
Chievo 0 Att: 12,172

Roma 5 (Florenzi 8, Gervinho 17, 62, Benatia 25, Ljajic 85)
Bologna 0 Att: 38,467

Sassuolo 2 (Schelotto 55, Floro Flores 76)
Lazio 2 (Andre Dias 50, Candreva 54) Att: 10,687

Torino 0
Juventus 1 (Pogba 54) Att: 18,982

Verona 2 (Iturbe 40, Jorginho pen 74)
Livorno 1 (Rinaudo 45) Att: 17,729

Monday, September 30
Fiorentina 2 (Rodriguez 64, Vargas 78)
Parma 2 (Gargano 45, Gobbi 90+2) Att: 28,524

Saturday, October 5
Chievo 0
Atalanta 1 (Moralez 16) Att: 5,000

Internazionale 0
Roma 3 (Totti 18, pen 40, Florenzi 44) Att: 60,336

Sunday, October 6
Bologna 1 (Diamanti pen 52)
Verona 4 (Cacciatore 22, Iturbe 29, Toni 56, Jorginho 90+3) Att: 16,743

Catania 1 (Barrientos 59)
Genoa 1 (Legrottaglie og 87) Att: 12,482

Juventus 3 (Pirlo 15, Giovinco 69, Chiellini 76)
Milan 2 (Muntari 1, 90) Att: 38,722

Lazio 0
Fiorentina 0 Att: 30,562

Napoli 4 (Pandev 4, Inler 26, Callejon 54, Hamsik 83)
Livorno 0 Att: 46,503

Parma 3 (Palladino 32, Rosi 70, Cassano 76)
Sassuolo 1 (Berardi pen 45+6) Att: 10,500

Sampdoria 2 (Sansone 41, Eder pen 90+3)
Torino 2 (Immobile 66, Cerci pen 76) Att: 20,492

Udinese 2 (Danilo 33, Di Natale 53)
Cagliari 0 Att: 12,105

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Roma	7	7	0	0	20	1	21
Napoli	7	6	1	0	18	4	19
Juventus	7	6	1	0	14	6	19
Inter	7	4	2	1	16	6	14
Verona	7	4	1	2	13	10	13
Fiorentina	7	3	3	1	13	8	12
Lazio	7	3	2	2	11	10	11
Udinese	7	3	1	3	9	8	10
Torino	7	2	3	2	10	10	9
Parma	7	2	3	2	11	12	9
Atalanta	7	3	0	4	9	10	9
Milan	7	2	2	3	13	13	8
Livorno	7	2	2	3	8	10	8
Cagliari	7	1	4	2	8	11	7
Genoa	7	1	2	4	6	11	5
Catania	7	1	2	4	5	11	5
Chievo	7	1	1	5	5	13	4
Sampdoria	7	0	3	4	6	13	3
Bologna	7	0	3	4	8	20	3
Sassuolo	7	0	2	5	5	21	2

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

Leading goalscorers

6 Alessio Cerci (Torino)
5 Marek Hamsik (Napoli)
5 Giuseppe Rossi (Fiorentina)
4 Jose Callejon (Napoli)
4 Alessandro Florenzi (Roma)

NORWAY

Sep 13: Aalesund 1 Molde 3.
Sep 14: Sogndal 1 Lillestrom 2; Haugesund 1 Viking 1.
Sep 15: Stromsgodset 3 Odd 1; Honefoss 0 Start 1; Valerenga 4 Brann 3; Sandnes Ulf 2 Sarpsborg 0; Tromso 1 Rosenborg 0.
Sep 20: Rosenborg 1 Haugesund 1.
Sep 21: Lillestrom 1 Honefoss 2; Brann 1 Stromsgodset 1.
Sep 22: Sarpsborg 3 Tromso 0; Molde 4 Sandnes Ulf 1; Odd 5 Aalesund 1; Start 2 Sogndal 0; Viking 1 Valerenga 0.
Sep 27: Sogndal 0 Stromsgodset 5.
Sep 28: Honefoss 2 Viking 2; Aalesund 0 Brann 0.
Sep 29: Haugesund 1 Molde 1; Sandnes Ulf 1 Lillestrom 1; Valerenga 1 Odd 2; Tromso 2 Start 3; Sarpsborg 1 Rosenborg 2.
Oct 4: Brann 0 Haugesund 1.
Oct 5: Viking 1 Sandnes Ulf 1; Stromsgodset 2 Valerenga 1.
Oct 6: Start 1 Sarpsborg 1; Molde 1 Tromso 0; Lillestrom 1 Aalesund 1; Odd 0 Sogndal 0; Rosenborg 0 Honefoss 0.

NORWAY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Stromsgodset	26	16	5	5	60	26	53
Rosenborg	26	15	8	3	44	23	53
Viking	26	11	10	5	34	26	43
Haugesund	26	12	6	8	33	31	42
Aalesund	26	11	7	8	49	41	40
Molde	26	10	8	8	45	36	38
Brann	26	10	5	11	39	39	35
Odd	26	9	6	11	33	30	33
Lillestrom	26	8	9	9	32	35	33
Start	26	8	8	10	41	44	32
Valerenga	26	8	6	12	36	46	30
Sogndal	26	7	9	10	28	40	30
Sandnes Ulf	26	8	6	12	30	49	30
Tromso	26	6	7	13	34	40	25
Honefoss	26	5	10	11	29	42	25
Sarpsborg	26	6	6	14	33	52	24

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated, 3rd bottom will enter rel/prom play-off

POLAND

Regular season

Sep 13: Widzew 1 Podbeskidzie 1; Wisla 3 Piast 0.
Sep 14: Zawisza 2 Cracovia 0; Slask 2 Lech 0; Korona 3 Legia 5.
Sep 15: Jagiellonia 6 Ruch 0; Pogon 1 Lechia 1.
Sep 16: Gornik 2 Zaglebie 1.
Sep 19: Podbeskidzie 0 Jagiellonia 1.
Sep 20: Piast 3 Widzew 0; Lech 1 Pogon 2.
Sep 21: Lechia 1 Zawisza 1; Cracovia 1 Wisla 1; Zaglebie 2 Korona 0.
Sep 22: Ruch 1 Slask 1; Legia 2 Gornik 1.
Sep 23: Pogon 2 Podbeskidzie 1; Piast 0 Lech 2.
Sep 24: Zawisza 2 Zaglebie 0; Wisla 3 Lechia 0.
Sep 25: Slask 0 Cracovia 3; Widzew 0 Ruch 1; Jagiellonia 2 Legia 3.
Sep 26: Korona 2 Gornik 2.
Sep 27: Podbeskidzie 0 Piast 1.
Sep 28: Cracovia 0 Pogon 1; Ruch 1 Wisla 1; Legia 2 Slask 1.
Sep 29: Zaglebie 1 Jagiellonia 1; Lech 1 Widzew 0.
Sep 30: Gornik 3 Zawisza 2; Lechia 2 Korona 2.
Oct 4: Zawisza 0 Korona 1; Slask 2 Zaglebie 0.
Oct 5: Jagiellonia 1 Cracovia 2; Pogon 1 Gornik 4; Podbeskidzie 0 Lech 0.
Oct 6: Wisla 1 Legia 0; Widzew 4 Lechia 1.
Oct 7: Piast 0 Ruch 2.

POLAND – REGULAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Legia	11	8	0	3	26	12	24
Gornik	11	6	4	1	22	13	22
Wisla	11	5	6	0	15	5	21
Pogon	11	5	4	2	15	15	19
Lech	11	4	4	3	11	10	16
Jagiellonia	11	4	3	4	19	15	15
Lechia	11	3	6	2	15	16	15
Slask	11	3	5	3	14	13	14
Cracovia	11	4	2	5	13	14	14
Piast	11	4	2	5	12	16	14
Ruch	11	3	5	3	12	17	14
Widzew	11	3	2	6	12	21	11
Zawisza	11	2	4	5	14	15	10
Zaglebie	11	2	3	6	7	12	9
Korona	11	2	3	6	13	19	9
Podbeskidzie	11	1	5	5	8	15	8

30-round regular season (15x2); top 8 will form championship group, bottom 8 will form relegation group (from which the bottom 2 will go down)

PORTUGAL

Sep 14: Rio Ave 0 Guimaraes 1; Benfica 3 Pacos de Ferreira 1; Porto 2 Gil Vicente 0.
Sep 15: Academica 2 Belenenses 1; Nacional 0 Arouca 1; Setubal 2 Maritimo 4; Olhanense 0 Sporting 2; Braga 3 Estoril 2.
Sep 20: Arouca 0 Braga 1.
Sep 21: Gil Vicente 1 Olhanense 1; Belenenses 1 Maritimo 0; Sporting 1 Rio Ave 1.
Sep 22: Nacional 1 Academica 0; Guimaraes 0 Benfica 1; Estoril 2 Porto 2.
Sep 23: Pacos de Ferreira 1 Setubal 1.
Sep 27: Porto 1 Guimaraes 0
Sep 28: Academica 0 Arouca 0; Rio Ave 0 Nacional 3; Maritimo 3 Pacos de Ferreira 4; Olhanense 1 Estoril 2; Benfica 1 Belenenses 1; Braga 1 Sporting 2.
Sep 30: Setubal 2 Gil Vicente 2.
Oct 4: Academica 0 Rio Ave 1.
Oct 5: Belenenses 2 Olhanense 0; Sporting 4 Setubal 0.
Oct 6: Gil Vicente 2 Pacos de Ferreira 1; Nacional 3 Braga 0; Arouca 1 Porto 3; Estoril 1 Benfica 2.
Oct 7: Guimaraes 1 Maritimo 0.

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Porto	7	6	1	0	15	4	19
Sporting	7	5	2	0	19	4	17
Benfica	7	4	2	1	11	7	14
Nacional	7	4	1	2	12	7	13
Braga	7	4	0	3	9	9	12
Estoril	7	3	2	2	13	11	11
Gil Vicente	7	3	2	2	9	8	11
Rio Ave	7	3	1	3	7	6	10
Guimaraes	7	3	1	3	6	7	10
Maritimo	7	2	1	4	10	13	7
Belenenses	7	2	1	4	8	11	7
Arouca	7	2	1	4	5	11	7
Olhanense	7	1	2	4	4	10	5
Setubal	7	1	2	4	10	17	5
Academica	7	1	2	4	3	10	5
Pacos Ferreira	7	1	1	5	7	13	4

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Sep 20: St Patrick's 2 Dundalk 0; Derry 2 Bray 0; UCD 0 Sligo 3; Shelbourne 0 Bohemians 3.
Sep 24: Drogheda 2 Cork 3; Limerick 2 Shamrock 0.
Sep 26: Bray 1 St Patrick's 3.
Sep 27: Bohemians 2 Derry 0; Cork 2 UCD 0; Dundalk 1 Limerick 2; Sligo 2 Shelbourne 0; Shamrock 3 Drogheda 1.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Rovers' second cup

Shamrock Rovers added the Irish League Cup to the All-Ireland Setanta Cup they won in May with a 2-0 victory over the same Final opponents, Drogheda United. Gary McCabe, from the penalty spot, and Thomas Stewart were on target for the Dublin side, while Rovers' Ken Oman and Derek Prendergast of Drogheda were sent off.

SCOTLAND

Celtic home shock

Morton became the first second-tier side to win away to Celtic for 42 years, knocking the reigning league champions out of the Scottish League Cup with a penalty in extra-time from Doug Imrie.

Upset...Imrie celebrates his winner for Morton at Celtic

SPAIN

New San Mames

Athletic Bilbao celebrated the opening of their new San Mames stadium with a 3-2 win over Celta Vigo.

The new stadium cost €173million and replaced the previous San Mames, which was the oldest stadium in Spain and had been Bilbao's home for 100 years before being

Sep 30: Dundalk 3 Derry 0; Limerick 1 Bohemians 0; Sligo 0 Cork 0; Shamrock 3 Bray 0; Shelbourne 2 Drogheda 2.
Oct 4: Derry 3 Shelbourne 1; UCD 1 St Patrick's 3.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St Patrick's	30	20	7	3	51	15	67
Dundalk	30	19	4	7	48	29	61
Sligo	30	17	9	4	48	18	60
Derry	30	16	3	11	50	38	51
Shamrock	30	12	12	6	38	25	48
Cork	30	11	7	12	38	41	40
Limerick	30	10	9	11	37	39	39
Drogheda	30	7	13	10	41	42	34
Bohemians	30	7	7	16	26	44	28
UCD	30	7	5	18	41	67	26
Shelbourne	30	5	6	19	21	48	21
Bray	30	5	6	19	31	64	21

33-round season (11x3); bottom team will be relegated, 2nd bottom will enter rel/prom play-off

ROMANIA

Sep 13: Pandurii 2 Dinamo 1.
Sep 14: Steaua 5 Sageata 0.
Sep 15: Corona 1 Gaz Metan 2; Petrolul 2 Concordia 0; Otelul 0 Astra 4; Universitatea 0 CFR 0.
Sep 16: Viitorul 0 Botosani 0; Ceahlaul 1 Brasov 1; Vaslui 1 Poli 0.
Sep 20: Sageata 1 Corona 0; Gaz Metan 2 Universitatea 1; Poli 0 Viitorul 0.
Sep 21: Brasov 1 Vaslui 1; Dinamo 1 Petrolul 1.
Sep 22: Botosani 1 Steaua 2; CFR 1 Pandurii 1.
Sep 23: Concordia 1 Otelul 1; Astra 0 Ceahlaul 0.
Sep 27: Universitatea 1 Sageata 1.
Sep 28: Pandurii 1 Gaz Metan 2; Steaua 3 Poli 0.
Sep 29: Corona 1 Botosani 2; Viitorul 2 Vaslui 0; Otelul 1 Dinamo 2.
Sep 30: Astra 3 Brasov 0; Ceahlaul 3 Concordia 1; Petrolul 3 CFR 2.
Oct 4: Brasov 4 Viitorul 0; Poli 0 Corona 0.
Oct 5: Concordia 3 Astra 1; Vaslui 0 Steaua 1.
Oct 6: Dinamo 1 Ceahlaul 1; Sageata 0 Pandurii 4; Gaz Metan 1 Petrolul 0.
Oct 7: Botosani 1 Universitatea 1; CFR 7 Otelul 2.

ROMANIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Steaua	8	7	1	0	20	5	22
Astra	9	6	1	2	24	9	19
Petrolul	10	5	4	1	13	8	19
Botosani	10	5	4	1	11	7	19
Pandurii	10	5	2	3	20	12	17
Ceahlaul	10	4	5	1	14	7	17
Gaz Metan	10	4	3	3	12	11	15
Dinamo	10	3	4	3	15	10	13
CFR	10	3	4	3	15	16	13
Poli	10	3	3	4	9	11	12
Sageata	10	3	3	4	9	16	12
Brasov	10	2	4	4	11	13	10
Concordia	7	3	1	3	10	12	10
Otelul	10	3	1	6	10	21	10
Viitorul	9	1	4	4	4	13	7
Universitatea	10	0	4	6	6	20	4
Vaslui[1]	9	3	2	4	8	8	3
Corona	10	0	2	8	5	17	2

34-round season (17x2); bottom 4 will be relegated
[1]8pts deducted because of debts to an agent

RUSSIA

Sep 14: CSKA 1 Rostov 0; Volga 0 Spartak 1; Krasnodar 1 Krylia Sovetov 1; Zenit 2 Terek 0.
Sep 15: Lokomotiv 1 Kuban 0; Tom 2 Anzhi 2; Amkar 0 Rubin 0.
Sep 16: Ural 1 Dynamo 4.
Sep 21: Dynamo 1 Lokomotiv 3; Krylia Sovetov 1 Ural 1; Terek 0 Krasnodar 1.
Sep 22: Volga 2 Anzhi 1; Spartak 3 CSKA 0; Rubin 1 Tom 2; Kuban 0 Amkar 3; Rostov 0 Zenit 4.
Sep 25: Krylia Sovetov 1 Zenit 4; Spartak 3 Krasnodar 2; Kuban 3 Terek 1; CSKA 0 Anzhi 0.
Sep 26: Tom 1 Volga 0; Amkar 1 Rostov 0; Ural 0 Lokomotiv 3; Rubin 2 Dynamo 2.
Sep 28: Terek 2 CSKA 0; Zenit 4 Spartak 2.
Sep 29: Dynamo 2 Krylia Sovetov 0; Volga 1 Kuban 0; Krasnodar 1 Rubin 0; Anzhi 2 Amkar 2.
Sep 30: Lokomotiv 0 Tom 0; Rostov 1 Ural 1.
Oct 4: Volga 0 Amkar 2.
Oct 5: Ural 0 Krasnodar 2; K Sovetov 2 Lokomotiv 2.
Oct 6: CSKA 0 Dynamo 2; Spartak 0 Terek 0; Tom 0 Zenit 3; Rubin 5 Anzhi 1; Kuban 2 Rostov 2.

RUSSIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zenit	12	9	2	1	30	10	29
Lokomotiv	12	7	3	2	24	11	24
Spartak	12	7	3	2	22	13	24
Krasnodar	12	6	3	3	19	14	21
CSKA	12	6	3	3	12	13	21
Amkar	12	5	5	2	15	8	20
Dynamo	12	5	5	2	20	16	20
Rostov	12	4	4	4	16	18	16
Rubin	12	3	7	2	15	9	16
Kuban	12	3	5	4	14	16	14
Volga	12	4	1	7	10	20	13
Krylia Sovetov	12	1	7	4	10	16	10
Tom	12	2	2	8	9	20	8
Terek	12	1	4	7	6	13	7
Ural	12	1	4	7	10	24	7
Anzhi	12	0	6	6	12	23	6

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated, 3rd & 4th bottom will enter rel/prom play-offs

SCOTLAND

Regular season

Sep 14: Hearts 1 Celtic 3; Kilmarnock 1 Inverness 2; St Johnstone 1 Hibernian 2; St Mirren 0 Motherwell 1; Partick 0 Aberdeen 3.
Sep 15: Ross County 2 Dundee United 4.
Sep 21: Aberdeen 1 Inverness 0; Ross County 2 Hearts 1; Celtic 2 St Johnstone 1; Partick 1 Kilmarnock 1; Hibernian 2 St Mirren 0.
Sep 22: Dundee United 2 Motherwell 2.
Sep 28: Kilmarnock 2 Celtic 5; Hearts 0 Dundee United 0; Inverness 3 Hibernian 0; Motherwell 3 Ross County 1; St Johnstone 1 Partick 1.
Sep 30: St Mirren 1 Aberdeen 1.
Oct 5: Celtic 2 Motherwell 0; Dundee United 1 Kilmarnock 0; Hearts 0 St Mirren 2; Ross County 1 Aberdeen 0; St Johnstone 4 Inverness 0.
Oct 7: Partick 0 Hibernian 1.

SCOTLAND – REGULAR	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	8	7	1	0	19	7	22
Inverness	9	6	1	2	15	8	19
Motherwell	9	5	1	3	11	11	16
Aberdeen	9	4	2	3	11	8	14
Hibernian	9	4	2	3	8	8	14
Dundee Utd	9	3	4	2	12	7	13
St Johnstone	9	3	3	3	12	9	12
Partick	9	2	4	3	8	10	10
Ross County	9	3	1	5	11	17	10
St Mirren	8	1	2	5	5	13	5
Kilmarnock	9	0	3	6	8	16	3
Hearts[1]	9	2	2	5	6	12	-7

33-round regular season (11x3); top 6 will form championship group, bottom 6 will form relegation group (from which the bottom team will go down and the 2nd bottom will enter rel/prom play-offs)
[1]15pts deducted for going into administration

SPAIN

Saturday, September 14

Atletico Madrid 4 (Villa 15, Diego Costa pen 37, Tiago 64, Koke 67)
Almeria 2 (Rodri 40, Aleix Vidal 90) Att: 48,000

Barcelona 3 (Daniel Alves 36, Messi 75, Sanchez 90+3)
Sevilla 2 (Rakitic 80, Coke 90) Att: 75,756

Levante 0
Real Sociedad 0 Att: 13,000

Villarreal 2 (Cani 21, Dos Santos 70)
Real Madrid 2 (Bale 38, Cristiano Ronaldo 64) Att: 22,000

Sunday, September 15

Betis 3 (Jorge Molina 10, Sevilla 22, 35)
Valencia 1 (Ricardo Costa 68) Att: 38,000

Getafe 2 (Fedor 35, 52)
Osasuna 1 (Torres 11) Att: 8,000

Granada 0
Espanyol 1 (Lanzarote 76) Att: 13,300

Malaga 5 (El Hamdaoui 31, 62, 67, Portillo 40, Eliseu 49)
Rayo Vallecano 0 Att: 24,800

Monday, September 16

Athletic Bilbao 3 (San Jose 18, Iraola 61, Benat 68)
Celta Vigo 2 (Charles 14, Santi Mina 79) Att: 35,686

Elche 0
Valladolid 0 Att: 23,570

Friday, September 20

Osasuna 2 (Armenteros 16, Oriol Riera 48)
Elche 1 (Edu Albacar pen 88) Att: 13,566

Saturday, September 21

Almeria 2 (Verza pen 45, Suso 51)
Levante 2 (El Zhar pen 55, Diop 60) Att: 9,646

Rayo Vallecano 0
Barcelona 4 (Pedro 33, 47, 72, Fabregas 79) Att: 11,740

Real Sociedad 0
Malaga 0 Att: 25,265

Valladolid 0
Atletico Madrid 2 (Raul Garcia 56, Diego Costa 72) Att: 16,900

Sunday, September 22

Betis 0
Granada 0 Att: 33,556

Celta Vigo 0
Villarreal 0 Att: 21,130

Real Madrid 4 (Pepe 19, Cristiano Ronaldo pen 33, 90+3, Isco 59)
Getafe 1 (Lafita 5) Att: 70,063

Valencia 3 (Jonas 32, 73, Victor Ruiz 82)
Sevilla 1 (Gameiro 52) Att: 35,000

Monday, September 23

Espanyol 3 (Victor Sanchez 24, 49, Sergio Garcia 65)
Athletic Bilbao 2 (De Marcos 43, Ibai Gomez 90+2) Att: 17,910

Tuesday, September 24

Atletico Madrid 2 (Diego Costa 18, 25)
Osasuna 1 (Oriol Riera 42) Att: 30,000

Barcelona 4 (Neymar 5, Messi 8, Busquets 23, Bartra 77)
Real Sociedad 1 (De la Bella 64) Att: 70,066

Levante 1 (Diawara 36)
Valladolid 1 (Javi Guerra 42) Att: 12,336

Malaga 2 (Tissone 68, Portillo 90+1)
Almeria 0 Att: 23,005

Wednesday, September 25

Elche 1 (Boakye 90+2)
Real Madrid 2 (Cristiano Ronaldo 51, pen 90+6) Att: 28,754

Granada 0
Valencia 1 (Jonas 90+3) Att: 13,000

Sevilla 4 (Rakitic pen 17, 53, Bacca 80, 88)
Rayo Vallecano 1 (Adrian 55) Att: 25,800

Thursday, September 26

Athletic Bilbao 2 (De Marcos 73, San Jose 82)
Betis 1 (Jorge Molina 63) Att: 36,000

Getafe 2 (Lopez 44, Arroyo 50)
Celta Vigo 0 Att: 6,000

Villarreal 2 (Perbet 1, Jonathan 67)
Espanyol 1 (Sergio Garcia 80) Att: 16,000

Friday, September 27

Valladolid 2 (Javi Guerra 56, Osorio 64)
Malaga 2 (Santa Cruz 23, Pawlowski 76) Att: 13,000

Saturday, September 28

Almeria 0
Barcelona 2 (Messi 21, Adriano 56) Att: 11,975

Real Madrid 0
Atletico Madrid 1 (Diego Costa 11) Att: 79,845

Real Sociedad 1 (Griezmann 66)
Sevilla 1 (Jairo 18) Att: 25,000

Valencia 1 (Jonas 37)
Rayo Vallecano 0 Att: 35,000

Sunday, September 29

Betis 1 (Igiebor 36)
Villarreal 0 Att: 29,382

Celta Vigo 0
Elche 1 (Javi Marquez 63) Att: 19,678

Espanyol 0
Getafe 2 (Colunga 73, 90+2) Att: 19,489

Osasuna 0
Levante 1 (Xumetra 88) Att: 13,488

Monday, September 30

Granada 2 (El Arabi pen 53, 61)
Athletic Bilbao 0 Att: 12,500

demolished at the end of last season. Bilbao played the first home game of this season at Real Sociedad's Anoeta ground.

Although they beat Rayo Vallecano 4-0 in La Liga, Barcelona enjoyed less possession than their opponents in a match for the first time in 317 games. The reigning league champions had the ball just 46 per cent of the time.

Home sweet home...Benat scores Bilbao's third against Celta

SWEDEN

TV show stops game

The second division game between Assyriska and Sundsvall was postponed to allow Sundsvall midfielder Kevin Walker to take part in TV4's *Idol* talent show.

"I play football during the week and then take part in *Idol* at the weekend," says the singer who has taken the programme by storm.

UKRAINE

Midfielder Bilyi dies

Zorya Luhansk midfielder Maksym Bilyi passed away at the age of 24 following a long illness. He died of what is believed to be a brain tumour. He had not played for almost two years after a clash of heads, in a game against Metalurh Donetsk in 2011, left him complaining of constant headaches.

Friday, October 4
Malaga 0
Osasuna 1 (Oriol Riera 23) Att: 21,538

Villarreal 3 (Bruno 30, Dos Santos 49, Pina 82)
Granada 0 Att: 15,000

Saturday, October 5
Barcelona 4 (Sanchez 14, 64, Xavi 52, Neymar 70)
Valladolid 1 (Javi Guerra 10) Att: 70,005

Elche 2 (Coro 40, 74)
Espanyol 1 (Thievy 66) Att: 22,603

Levante 2 (Diawara 57, El Zhar 86)
Real Madrid 3 (Sergio Ramos 61, Morata 90, Cristiano Ronaldo 90+4) Att: 24,102

Rayo Vallecano 1 (Jonathan Viera pen 89)
Real Sociedad 0 Att: 10,000

Sunday, October 6
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Mikel Rico 76)
Valencia 1 (Banega pen 43) Att: 35,000

Atletico Madrid 2 (Diego Costa 42, 62)
Celta Vigo 1 (Nolito 71) Att: 52,000

Getafe 3 (Pedro Leon 16, 22, Colunga 27)
Betis 1 (Rafa og 51) Att: 8,000

Sevilla 2 (Gameiro 6, Rakitic 90+2)
Almeria 1 (Rodri 23) Att: 31,123

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	8	8	0	0	28	6	24
Atletico	8	8	0	0	21	6	24
Real Madrid	8	6	1	1	17	9	19
Villarreal	8	5	2	1	15	7	17
Getafe	8	4	1	3	12	11	13
Athletic	8	4	1	3	13	13	13
Valencia	8	4	1	3	11	11	13
Espanyol	8	3	2	3	11	11	11
Levante	8	2	4	2	8	14	10
Malaga	8	2	3	3	11	7	9
Sevilla	8	2	3	3	13	14	9
Elche	8	2	3	3	8	11	9
Betis	8	2	2	4	8	10	8
Granada	8	2	2	4	5	8	8
Sociedad	8	1	4	3	6	9	7
Celta	8	1	3	4	8	12	6
Valladolid	8	1	3	4	7	13	6
Osasuna	8	2	0	6	6	13	6
Rayo	8	2	0	6	6	21	6
Almeria	8	0	3	5	11	19	3

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

Leading goalscorers
10 Diego Costa (Atletico Madrid)
8 Lionel Messi (Barcelona)
7 Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
5 Pedro (Barcelona)
5 Rodri (Almeria)

SWEDEN

Sep 14: Gefle 1 Brommapojkarna 0; Atvidaberg 4 Oster 0.
Sep 15: AIK 0 Kalmar 0; Halmstad 0 Gothenburg 1; Elfsborg 4 Norrkoping 1; Hacken 3 Helsingborg 2; Syrianska 1 Mjallby 2.
Sep 16: Malmo 0 Djurgarden 2.
Sep 20: Oster 0 Halmstad 1.
Sep 21: Kalmar 0 Gefle 0.
Sep 22: Brommapojkarna 1 Hacken 0; Mjallby 2 Elfsborg 2; Norrkoping 0 Malmo 2; Djurgarden 2 Atvidaberg 0; Helsingborg 2 Syrianska 2.
Sep 23: Gothenburg 3 AIK 1.
Sep 24: Oster 1 Kalmar 2.
Sep 25: Brommapojkarna 1 Elfsborg 0; Hacken 4 Syrianska 0; Helsingborg 0 Malmo 3.
Sep 26: Norrkoping 3 Halmstad 2; Gothenburg 3 Gefle 1; Mjallby 0 Atvidaberg 1; Djurgarden 2 AIK 2.
Sep 28: Syrianska 1 Brommapojkarna 2.
Sep 29: Halmstad 1 Djurgarden 4; Kalmar 2 Gothenburg 1; Elfsborg 1 Helsingborg 1.
Sep 30: AIK 2 Oster 1; Gefle 0 Hacken 0; Malmo 1 Mjallby 0; Atvidaberg 1 Norrkoping 3.
Oct 4: Mjallby 2 AIK 3.
Oct 5: Brommapojkarna 0 Atvidaberg 0; Norrkoping 0 Kalmar 1.
Oct 6: Djurgarden 2 Gothenburg 1; Oster 1 Gefle 4; Syrianska 1 Elfsborg 3; Helsingborg 4 Halmstad 2; Hacken 2 Malmo 0.

SWEDEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Malmo	27	16	6	5	49	28	54
Gothenburg	27	15	5	7	46	29	50
Helsingborg	27	14	7	6	58	33	49
AIK	27	14	7	6	45	31	49
Kalmar	27	12	10	5	29	21	46
Elfsborg	27	11	9	7	47	32	42
Djurgarden	27	11	6	10	34	41	39
Norrkoping	27	11	5	11	44	43	38
Atvidaberg	27	10	6	11	31	31	36
Hacken	27	10	5	12	34	36	35
Mjallby	27	9	6	12	43	43	33
Bromm'karna	27	8	7	12	30	44	31
Gefle	27	6	12	9	31	39	30
Oster	27	6	7	14	25	41	25
Halmstad	27	5	9	13	26	43	24
Syrianska (R)	27	2	5	20	21	58	11

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated, 3rd bottom will enter rel/prom play-off

SWITZERLAND

Sep 21: Young Boys 0 Lucerne 1.
Sep 22: Lausanne 1 Zurich 2; Grasshopper 2 Thun 1; Sion 1 Basle 3.
Sep 24: St Gallen 0 Young Boys 0.
Sep 25: Thun 0 Basle 2; Sion 2 Lausanne 1; Lucerne 0 Grasshopper 2.
Sep 26: Zurich 1 Aarau 2.
Sep 28: Basle 2 Sion 2; Grasshopper 0 St Gallen 1.
Sep 29: Lucerne 1 Thun 1; Aarau 2 Lausanne 3; Young Boys 0 Zurich 1.
Oct 5: Zurich 0 Lucerne 2; Sion 2 Young Boys 2.
Oct 6: Thun 1 Grasshopper 1; St Gallen 1 Aarau 0; Lausanne 1 Basle 2.

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	11	6	4	1	20	11	22
Grasshopper	10	5	4	1	14	7	19
St Gallen	10	5	3	2	12	7	18
Lucerne	11	5	3	3	15	15	18
Young Boys	11	5	2	4	19	12	17
Zurich	10	4	2	4	12	14	14
Thun	11	2	5	4	17	18	11
Sion	11	2	5	4	8	12	11
Aarau	10	3	1	6	15	22	10
Lausanne	11	1	1	9	9	23	4

36-round season (9x4); bottom team will be relegated

TURKEY

Sep 13: Galatasaray 1 Antalyaspor 1.
Sep 14: Kayseri Erciyesspor 1 Akhisar 0; Trabzonspor 1 Karabukspor 0; Gaziantepspor 2 Rizespor 5.
Sep 15: Sivasspor 3 Eskisehirspor 2; Genclerbirligi 1 Kayserispor 1; Bursaspor 0 Besiktas 3; Elazigspor 2 Konyaspor 0.
Sep 16: Kasimpasa 2 Fenerbahce 3.
Sep 20: Karabukspor 0 Kayseri Erciyesspor 0; Akhisar 2 Gaziantepspor 0.
Sep 21: Konyaspor 1 Genclerbirligi 0; Sivasspor 1 Kasimpasa 2; Fenerbahce 4 Elazigspor 0; Eskisehirspor 2 Antalyaspor 1.
Sep 22: Rizespor 2 Bursaspor 1.
Sep 23: Kayserispor 0 Trabzonspor 1.
Sep 27: Bursaspor 0 Akhisar 0.
Sep 28: Galatasaray 1 Rizespor 1; Gaziantepspor 3 Karabukspor 0.
Sep 29: Trabzonspor 2 Konyaspor 0; Elazigspor 2 Sivasspor 4; Genclerbirligi 0 Fenerbahce 1; Kasimpasa 0 Eskisehirspor 2.
Sep 30: Kayseri Erciyesspor 1 Kayserispor 1; Antalyaspor 2 Besiktas 0.
Oct 4: Karabukspor 0 Bursaspor 1.
Oct 5: Kayserispor 0 Gaziantepspor 1; Eskisehirspor 0 Besiktas 1; Konyaspor 1 Kayseri Erciyesspor 0.
Oct 6: Kasimpasa 4 Elazigspor 0; Akhisar 2 Galatasaray 1; Rizespor 1 Antalyaspor 2; Sivasspor 2 Genclerbirligi 0; Fenerbahce 0 Trabzonspor 0.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fenerbahce	7	5	1	1	16	7	16
Besiktas	6	5	0	1	12	4	15
Rizespor	7	4	1	2	13	9	13
Akhisar	7	4	1	2	10	6	13
Trabzonspor	7	4	1	2	6	6	13
Kasimpasa	7	4	0	3	13	10	12
Sivasspor	7	4	0	3	14	12	12
Eskisehirspor	7	3	1	3	8	6	10
Antalyaspor	7	2	3	2	7	6	9
Konyaspor	7	3	0	4	6	10	9
Karabukspor	7	2	2	3	5	7	8
Bursaspor	7	2	2	3	5	9	8
Galatasaray	6	1	4	1	6	6	7
Gaziantepspor	7	2	1	4	7	11	7
Elazigspor	7	2	1	4	10	18	7
K Erciyesspor	7	1	3	3	5	8	6
Kayserispor	7	1	2	4	5	10	5
Genclerbirligi	7	1	1	5	4	7	4

34-round season (17x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

UKRAINE

Sep 13: Karpaty 3 Shakhtar 2; Metalurh Zaporizhya 0 Chornomorets 1.
Sep 14: Illichivets 1 Zorya 0; Arsenal 2 Volyn 1; Vorskla 2 Sevastopol 2.
Sep 15: Metalurh Donetsk 4 Hoverla 2; Dnipro 1 Tavriya 0; Metalist 3 Dynamo 0.
Sep 20: Volyn 1 Illichivets 0; Sevastopol 4 Metalurh Donetsk 2.
Sep 21: Hoverla 2 Arsenal 0; Tavriya 0 Metalist 3; Shakhtar 3 Vorskla 0.
Sep 22: Metalurh Zaporizhya 2 Dnipro 3; Chornomorets 3 Zorya 1; Dynamo 1 Karpaty 0.
Sep 28: Zorya 2 Volyn 0; Metalurh Donetsk 2 Shakhtar 2; Dnipro 2 Chornomorets 0.
Sep 29: Illichivets 0 Hoverla 1; Karpaty 2 Tavriya 1; Vorskla 2 Dynamo 2; Metalist 3 Metalurh Zaporizhya 2.
Sep 30: Arsenal 3 Sevastopol 1.
Oct 4: Tavriya 0 Vorskla 1.
Oct 5: Hoverla 0 Zorya 0; Metalurh Zaporizhya 1 Karpaty 3; Shakhtar 7 Arsenal 0.
Oct 6: Sevastopol 0 Illichivets 1; Dynamo 9 Metalurh Donetsk 1; Chornomorets 0 Volyn 0.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Metalist	11	9	2	0	26	7	29
Shakhtar	12	8	2	2	31	11	26
Dnipro	11	8	2	1	21	9	26
Chornomorets	12	7	3	2	13	8	24
Dynamo	12	6	3	3	24	15	21
Vorskla	12	5	5	2	18	16	20
Zorya	12	4	4	4	15	11	16
Karpaty	12	4	4	4	12	13	16
Illichivets	12	5	1	6	9	10	16
Metalurh D	12	4	2	6	16	25	14
Sevastopol	12	3	4	5	15	20	13
Volyn	12	3	4	5	10	19	13
Hoverla	12	3	2	7	11	16	11
Arsenal	12	3	1	8	10	26	10
Metalurh Z	12	1	3	8	13	21	6
Tavriya	12	1	0	11	6	23	3

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

SOUTH AMERICA

SUDAMERICANA CUP

3rd round

1st legs - Sep 18-26; 2nd legs - Sep 25-Oct 24
Atletico Nacional (Col) v Bahia (Bra)
1-0, *2nd leg: Oct 24*
Coritiba (Bra) v Itagui (Col)
0-1, *2nd leg: Oct 24*
La Equidad (Col) v Velez Sarsfield (Arg)
1-2, 1-2 (agg 2-4)
Lanus (Arg) v Universidad de Chile (Chl)
4-0, 0-1 (agg 4-1)
LDU Loja (Ecu) v River Plate (Arg)
2-1, 0-2 (agg 2-3)
Libertad (Par) v Sport Recife (Bra)
2-0, *2nd leg: Oct 23*
Ponte Preta (Bra) v Deportivo Pasto (Col)
2-0, *2nd leg: Oct 22*
Sao Paulo (Bra) v Universidad Catolica (Chl)
1-1, *2nd leg: Oct 23*

ARGENTINA

1st tournament

Sep 13: Belgrano 3 Velez 0; Lanus 4 Argentinos 0.
Sep 14: San Lorenzo 0 Godoy Cruz 0; Newell's 2 Olimpo 1; All Boys 4 Quilmes 0.
Sep 15: Tigre 2 Rosario 0; Rafaela 1 Estudiantes 0; Boca 2 Racing 0; Arsenal 1 River Plate 1.
Sep 17: Gimnasia 1 Colon 0.
Sep 20: Racing 0 Newell's 1; Godoy Cruz 2 Tigre 0.
Sep 21: Rosario 1 Arsenal 1; Olimpo 1 Belgrano 1.
Sep 22: Quilmes 0 Lanus 0; Colon 0 San Lorenzo 2; Estudiantes 1 Gimnasia 1; River Plate 1 All Boys 0; Argentinos 0 Boca 0.
Sep 23: Velez 4 Rafaela 1.
Sep 27: Arsenal 1 Godoy Cruz 0; Estudiantes 0 Velez 0; All Boys 1 Rosario 1.
Sep 28: San Lorenzo 3 Gimnasia 0; Rafaela 2 Olimpo 0.
Sep 29: Newell's 2 Argentinos 0; Tigre 1 Colon 0; Belgrano 3 Racing 0; Boca 2 Quilmes 0; Lanus 0 River Plate 1.
Oct 4: Argentinos 1 Belgrano 3.
Oct 5: Olimpo 1 Estudiantes 1; Quilmes 0 Newell's 2; San Lorenzo 0 Tigre 0.
Oct 6: River Plate 0 Boca 1; Racing 0 Rafaela 1.
Oct 7: Gimnasia 2 Velez 1; Colon 0 Arsenal 1; Godoy Cruz 2 All Boys 0; Rosario 2 Lanus 1.

USA

DC United victorious

Bottom of the Eastern Conference and with just three MLS win all season, DC United upset the odds to beat Real Salt Lake 1-0 and win the 100th US Open Cup. Lewis Neal scored the only goal in the Final for the Washington-based side, who last won the Cup in 2008.

Winner...DC's Conor Doyle (left)

ANGOLA

New league winners

Kabuscorp were crowned national champions for the first time, securing the Girabola with four games to spare following their 2-1 win over Primeiro de Maio. Fiston Ndjoli and Kebeixa each scored twice for the Luanda-based side who were formed by politician Benedict Kangamba.

BURKINA FASO

Record 13th title

ASFA Yennenga won their fifth consecutive league title to take their overall record haul to 13 – one more than arch-rivals Etoile Filante.

NIGERIA

Penalty shoot-out

Enyimba beat Warri Wolves on penalties to win the Nigerian Federation Cup Final. The two-time African champions twice came from behind in normal time, with Bright Esieme and Uwadiegwu Ugwu cancelling out goals from Musa Najere and Joseph Osadieye.

Shooting Stars striker Moses Ogaga passed away at the age of 26 after a protracted illness. He was an integral member of the five-times Nigerian champions'

ARGENTINA – 1ST TOURNAMENT

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Newell's	10	7	2	1	16	7	23
San Lorenzo	10	6	2	2	15	7	20
Arsenal	10	5	5	0	11	4	20
Boca	10	6	1	3	13	11	19
Gimnasia	10	5	2	3	11	12	17
Rafaela	10	5	1	4	13	14	16
Belgrano	10	4	3	3	16	12	15
Godoy Cruz	10	4	3	3	8	4	15
River Plate	10	4	2	4	8	6	14
Argentinos	10	4	2	4	9	12	14
Lanus	10	3	4	3	14	7	13
Velez	10	3	4	3	12	10	13
Estudiantes	10	2	7	1	9	7	13
Tigre	10	3	2	5	7	10	11
Rosario	10	3	2	5	9	13	11
All Boys	10	2	4	4	9	9	10
Colon	10	3	1	6	6	11	10
Quilmes	10	3	1	6	5	14	10
Olimpo	10	1	4	5	9	15	7
Racing	10	0	2	8	3	18	2

19-round tournament (19x1); no relegation after 1st tournament

BRAZIL

Sep 10: Internacional 1 Santos 2.
Sep 11: Paranaense 1 Fluminense 1; Goias 1 Cruzeiro 2; Bahia 2 Criciuma 2; Portuguesa 2 Vasco 0; Nautico 0 Gremio 2; Botafogo 1 Corinthians 0.
Sep 12: Internacional 2 Vitoria 2; Mineiro 3 Coritiba 0; Sao Paulo 1 Ponte Preta 0; Flamengo 2 Santos 1.
Sep 14: Fluminense 2 Portuguesa 1; Cruzeiro 1 Paranaense 0.
Sep 15: Coritiba 2 Bahia 2; Criciuma 0 Internacional 1; Ponte Preta 1 Flamengo 1; Corinthians 1 Goias 2; Vasco 0 Sao Paulo 2; Santos 1 Botafogo 2; Gremio 0 Mineiro 1; Vitoria 2 Nautico 1.
Sep 18: Gremio 1 Santos 1; Vasco 1 Vitoria 2; Coritiba 2 Goias 2; Criciuma 1 Fluminense 2; Cruzeiro 3 Botafogo 0; Ponte Preta 2 Corinthians 0; Sao Paulo 1 Mineiro 0.
Sep 19: Flamengo 2 Paranaense 4; Portuguesa 3 Nautico 0; Bahia 2 Internacional 0.
Sep 21: Vitoria 0 Gremio 0; Fluminense 1 Coritiba 1.
Sep 22: Nautico 0 Flamengo 0; Goias 1 Sao Paulo 0; Internacional 0 Portuguesa 1; Corinthians 0 Cruzeiro 0; Botafogo 1 Bahia 2; Santos 2 Criciuma 1; Paranaense 1 Ponte Preta 0; Mineiro 2 Vasco 1.
Sep 25: Criciuma 1 Mineiro 1; Santos 1 Nautico 1.
Sep 28: Goias 1 Fluminense 2; Botafogo 0 Ponte Preta 1; Nautico 3 Coritiba 0.
Sep 29: Flamengo 4 Criciuma 1; Sao Paulo 0 Gremio 1; Bahia 0 Vasco 0; Portuguesa 4 Corinthians 0; Internacional 1 Cruzeiro 2; Mineiro 3 Santos 1; Paranaense 3 Vitoria 5.
Oct 1: Ponte Preta 1 Nautico 2.
Oct 2: Gremio 1 Paranaense 0; Cruzeiro 4 Portuguesa 0; Fluminense 1 Botafogo 1; Vitoria 2 Goias 1; Corinthians 2 Bahia 0; Coritiba 0 Flamengo 2; Santos 3 Sao Paulo 0.
Oct 3: Mineiro 4 Ponte Preta 0; Vasco 3 Internacional 1.
Oct 5: Botafogo 0 Gremio 1; Sao Paulo 3 Vitoria 2.
Oct 6: Flamengo 1 Vasco 1; Internacional 1 Fluminense 0; Nautico 1 Cruzeiro 4; Mineiro 0 Corinthians 0; Paranaense 2 Coritiba 1; Bahia 1 Ponte Preta 1; Goias 1 Criciuma 1; Portuguesa 3 Santos 0.

BRAZIL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruzeiro	26	18	5	3	58	21	59
Gremio	26	14	6	6	32	21	48
Paranaense	26	12	8	6	45	35	44
Botafogo	26	12	7	7	37	30	43
Mineiro	26	10	9	7	32	26	39
Vitoria	26	10	7	9	38	38	37
Internacional	26	9	10	7	38	37	37
Santos	26	9	9	8	32	28	36
Corinthians	26	8	11	7	22	17	35
Portuguesa	26	9	7	10	40	38	34
Fluminense	26	9	7	10	31	33	34
Flamengo	26	8	10	8	31	31	34
Goias	26	8	10	8	28	32	34
Bahia	26	8	9	9	27	32	33
Coritiba	26	7	10	9	29	35	31
Sao Paulo	26	8	6	12	24	29	30
Vasco	26	7	8	11	35	42	29
Criciuma	26	7	5	14	32	44	26
Ponte Preta	26	6	5	15	26	40	23
Nautico	26	4	5	17	17	45	17

38-round season (19x2); bottom 4 will be relegated

Leading goalscorers

15 Ederson (Paranaense)
13 Gilberto (Portuguesa)
13 William (Ponte Preta)

CONCACAF

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group 1
Sep 19: W Connection (T&T) 0 Arabe Unido (Pan) 2.
Sep 25: Houston Dynamo (USA) 2 W Connection 0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Houston	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
Arabe Unido	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
W Connection	4	0	1	3	1	7	1

Group 2
Sep 17: Kansas City (USA) 1 Real Esteli (Nic) 1.
Sep 24: Olimpia (Hnd) 1 Real Esteli 0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kansas City	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Olimpia	3	2	0	1	2	2	6
Real Esteli	4	0	1	3	1	5	1

Group 3
Sep 18: Herediano (CR) 4 Valencia (Hai) 2.
Sep 24: Cruz Azul (Mex) 3 Valencia 0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruz Azul	3	3	0	0	8	1	9
Herediano	3	2	0	1	10	6	6
Valencia	4	0	0	4	4	15	0

Group 4
Sep 17: America (Mex) 3 San Miguelito (Pan) 0.
Sep 26: Alajuelense (CR) 2 San Miguelito 0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America	3	2	0	1	4	1	6
Alajuelense	3	2	0	1	3	1	6
San Miguelito	4	1	0	3	1	6	3

Group 5
Sep 17: San Jose Earthquakes (USA) 3 Montreal Impact (Can) 0.
Sep 24: Montreal Impact 2 Heredia (Gtm) 0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Heredia	3	2	0	1	2	2	6
Montreal	4	2	0	2	3	4	6
San Jose	3	1	0	2	3	2	3

Group 6
Sep 18: Caledonia AIA (T&T) 1 Toluca (Mex) 5.
Sep 25: Comunicaciones (Gtm) 2 Caledonia AIA 0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Toluca	3	3	0	0	10	3	9
Comunicac'es	3	2	0	1	6	2	6
Caledonia	4	0	0	4	2	13	0

Group 7
Sep 19: Luis Angel Firpo (ESv) 2 Victoria (Hnd) 1.
Sep 26: Tijuana (Mex) 6 Victoria 0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tijuana (Q)	4	3	1	0	10	2	10
Firpo	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Victoria	3	0	0	3	3	11	0

Group 8
Sep 18: Los Angeles Galaxy (USA) 1 Isidro Metapan (ESv) 0.
Sep 25: Cartagines (CR) 0 Los Angeles Galaxy 3.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 8

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Los Angeles (Q)	3	3	0	0	6	0	9
Cartagines	4	1	1	2	4	7	4
Metapan	3	0	1	2	2	5	1

Remaining matchday: *Oct 22-24*

Group winners qualify for quarter-finals

MEXICO

Apertura

Regular season
Sep 13: Queretaro 1 Atlante 0; Santos 2 America 1.
Sep 14: Cruz Azul 0 Tigres 1; Veracruz 0 Leon 1; Monterrey 1 Pachuca 0; Chiapas 3 Atlas 0.
Sep 15: Pumas 0 Morelia 1; Puebla 1 Toluca 1; Guadalajara 2 Tijuana 2.
Sep 20: Morelia 1 Monterrey 3; Tijuana 0 Cruz Azul 0.
Sep 21: America 3 Chiapas 1; Atlante 1 Pumas 0; Tigres 0 Puebla 0; Pachuca 1 Santos 1; Leon 2 Guadalajara 1; Atlas 3 Veracruz 3.
Sep 22: Toluca 4 Queretaro 0.
Sep 27: Queretaro 2 Tigres 2; Santos 3 Morelia 1.
Sep 28: Veracruz 0 America 1; Cruz Azul 1 Leon 0; Monterrey 0 Pumas 1; Chiapas 2 Pachuca 1.
Sep 29: Toluca 7 Atlante 1; Puebla 2 Tijuana 0; Guadalajara 1 Atlas 1.
Oct 1: America 2 Tijuana 0.
Oct 4: Morelia 2 Chiapas 1; Tijuana 1 Queretaro 0.
Oct 5: America 2 Guadalajara 0; Tigres 1 Toluca 2; Pachuca 1 Veracruz 1; Atlante 2 Monterrey 1; Leon 3 Puebla 1; Atlas 1 Cruz Azul 2.
Oct 6: Pumas 0 Santos 1.

MEXICO – APERTURA: REGULAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America (Q)	12	10	1	1	26	8	31
Leon	13	7	4	2	17	9	25
Toluca	13	6	5	2	29	13	23
Santos	12	6	5	1	21	13	23
Morelia	13	7	2	4	24	20	23
Cruz Azul	13	7	2	4	17	14	23
Chiapas	13	5	5	3	22	20	20
Queretaro	13	5	4	4	16	16	19
Tijuana	13	4	4	5	16	17	16
Puebla	13	3	6	4	15	16	15
Veracruz	13	3	6	4	17	19	15
Tigres	12	3	5	4	17	18	14
Monterrey	13	3	4	6	14	18	13
Pachuca	13	2	6	5	10	15	12
Atlante	13	2	3	8	12	25	9
Atlas	13	0	8	5	14	24	8
Guadalajara	12	1	5	6	12	22	8
Pumas	13	1	5	7	5	17	8

17-round regular season (17x1); top 8 will enter apertura championship play-offs; no relegation after apertura

Leading goalscorers

9 Pablo Velazquez (Toluca)
8 Hector Mancilla (Morelia)
8 Oribe Peralta (Santos)
8 Angel Reyna (Veracruz)

UNITED STATES

Regular season
Sep 11: Toronto 1 Chicago 1.
Sep 13: Seattle 2 Salt Lake 0.
Sep 14: Montreal 1 Columbus 2; DC United 2 Los Angeles 2; New York 2 Toronto 0; Philadelphia 0 Houston 1; Chicago 3 New England 2; Colorado 2 Dallas 1; San Jose 0 Vancouver 0; Chivas 1 Portland 1.
Sep 20: Portland 1 Colorado 0.
Sep 21: Montreal 0 Vancouver 3; Toronto 1 Kansas City 2; New England 2 DC United 1; Columbus 3 Chicago 0; Houston 5 Chivas 1; Salt Lake 1 San Jose 2; Los Angeles 1 Seattle 1.
Sep 22: New York 1 Dallas 0.
Sep 27: Kansas City 0 Philadelphia 1.
Sep 28: Toronto 4 DC United 1; Vancouver 0 Salt Lake 1; New England 1 Houston 1; Chicago 2 Montreal 2.
Sep 29: Portland 1 Los Angeles 0; Dallas 2 Columbus 4; Seattle 1 New York 1; Chivas 0 San Jose 1.
Oct 4: DC United 0 Chicago 3; Houston 1 Montreal 0.
Oct 5: New York 2 New England 2; Columbus 0 Kansas City 1; Philadelphia 1 Toronto 0; Salt Lake 1 Dallas 1; Colorado 5 Seattle 1.
Oct 6: Los Angeles 5 Chivas 0; Vancouver 2 Portland 2.

USA – REGULAR: EASTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
New York (Q)	32	15	8	9	50	39	53
Kansas City	31	15	6	10	44	29	51
Houston	31	13	8	10	39	37	47
Montreal	30	13	7	10	48	45	46
Philadelphia	31	12	9	10	39	39	45
Chicago	31	12	7	12	41	45	43
New England	31	11	9	11	44	36	42
Columbus	32	12	5	15	40	42	41
Toronto	32	5	11	16	29	46	26
DC United	31	3	6	22	20	55	15

34-round regular season (7x3 & 2x2 in own conference, 9x1 in western conference)

squad and represented Kano Pillars in the 2009 CAF Champions League.

SOUTH AFRICA

Stars beat Pirates

Platinum Stars beat Orlando Pirates on penalties to win the MTN8 tournament, which features the top eight teams from the previous season's South African Premier League.

JAPAN

Oita's short stay

Oita Trinita were relegated from the top flight after one season following their 2-0 loss to Cerezo Osaka.

TURKMENISTAN

Balkan are best

Balkan won the country's first-ever continental silverware, beating Khan Research Laboratories of Pakistan 1-0 in the AFC President's Cup Final.

UZBEKISTAN

Pyschur Final double

Oleksandr Pyschur scored both goals as Bunyodkor beat Nasaf Qarshi 2-1 in the Uzbek Cup Final. Ilkhom Yunusov replied for Nasaf, who have been runners-up for the past three seasons.

Final pair...Pyschur (left)

USA – REGULAR: WESTERN CONFERENCE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salt Lake	32	15	7	10	55	40	52
Seattle	30	15	6	9	40	34	51
Portland	31	12	14	5	48	33	50
Los Angeles	31	14	6	11	51	37	48
Colorado	31	13	9	9	42	32	48
San Jose	31	12	8	11	32	41	44
Vancouver	31	11	9	11	44	41	42
Dallas	31	10	11	10	43	47	41
Chivas	32	6	8	18	29	60	26

34-round regular season (8x3 in own conference, 10x1 in eastern conference)

Top 5 in both conferences will enter championship play-offs; no relegation from this league

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Sep 14: AC Leopards (Con) 1 Orlando Pirates (SAf) 0.
Sep 15: Al Ahly (Egy) 4 Zamalek (Egy) 2.
Sep 22: Orlando Pirates 0 Al Ahly 0; Zamalek 4 AC Leopards 1.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Ahly (Q)	6	3	2	1	8	7	11
O'do Pirates (Q)	6	2	2	2	8	4	8
Zamalek	6	2	1	3	10	12	7
AC Leopards	6	2	1	3	4	7	7

Group B

Sep 14: Esperance (Tun) 3 Recreativo Libolo (Ang) 2.
Sep 15: Sewe Sports (IvC) 0 Coton Sport (Cam) 0.
Sep 21: Coton Sport 1 Esperance 2; Recreativo Libolo 2 Sewe Sports 2.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Esperance (Q)	6	5	0	1	9	4	15
Coton Sport (Q)	6	2	2	2	5	6	8
Sewe Sports	6	1	2	3	5	6	5
Recreativo	6	1	2	3	8	11	5

Top 2 in both groups qualified for semi-finals

Semi-finals

1st legs - Oct 5/6; 2nd legs - Oct 19/20
Coton Sport v Al Ahly 1-1, *2nd leg: Oct 20*
Orlando Pirates v Esperance 0-0, *2nd leg: Oct 19*

CONFEDERATION CUP

Group A

Sep 14: Etoile Sahel (Tun) 1 CS Sfaxien (Tun) 1.
Sep 15: Stade Malien (Mli) 1 Saint George (Eth) 0.
Sep 22: CS Sfaxien 0 Stade Malien 0; Saint George 0 Etoile Sahel 0.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP A – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CS Sfaxien (Q)	6	4	2	0	8	3	14
Std Malien (Q)	6	2	2	2	3	4	8
Etoile Sahel	6	1	3	2	3	4	6
Saint George	6	1	1	4	4	7	4

Group B

Sep 14: TP Mazembe (DRC) 4 ES Setif (Alg) 2.
Sep 15: CA Bizertin (Tun) 1 FUS Rabat (Mor) 0.
Sep 21: ES Setif 1 CA Bizertin 0; FUS Rabat 2 TP Mazembe 0.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP B – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mazembe (Q)	6	3	1	2	9	6	10
CA Bizertin (Q)	6	2	2	2	3	3	8
FUS Rabat	6	2	2	2	5	6	8
ES Setif	6	1	3	2	5	7	6

Top 2 in both groups qualified for semi-finals

Semi-finals

1st legs - Oct 6; 2nd legs - Oct 19/20
CA Bizertin v CS Sfaxien 0-0, *2nd leg: Oct 20*
Stade Malien v TP Mazembe 1-2, *2nd leg: Oct 19*

BURKINA FASO

BURKINA FASO – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ASFA Y'nga (C)	30	20	5	5	50	16	65
Santos	30	14	11	5	35	18	53
RC Kadiogo	30	12	12	6	27	14	48
RC Bobo	30	13	9	8	21	17	48
Forces Armees	30	12	11	7	33	22	47
US Ou'dougou	30	12	10	8	30	25	46
Etoile Filante	30	11	11	8	26	17	44
Sonabel	30	11	7	12	25	21	40
Bobo Sport	30	9	11	10	26	29	38
Comoe	30	8	13	9	27	31	37
Yatenga	30	7	14	9	14	22	35
Majestic	30	7	10	13	13	28	31
ASF Bobo	30	6	11	13	16	25	29
Bouloump'kou	30	7	7	16	21	37	28
JCB (R)	30	4	12	14	11	35	24
Maya (R)	30	3	14	13	18	36	23

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Quarter-finals

1st legs - Aug 21; 2nd legs - Sep 18
Al Ahli (Sau) v Seoul (SKo) 1-1, 0-1 (agg 1-2)
Esteghlal (Irn) v Buriram United (Tha) 1-0, 2-1 (agg 3-1)
Guangzhou Evergrande (Chn) v Lekhwiya (Qat) 2-0, 4-1 (agg 6-1)
Kashiwa Reysol (Jap) v Al Shabab (Sau) 1-1, 2-2 (agg 3-3, Kashiwa on away goals)

Semi-finals

1st legs - Sep 25; 2nd legs - Oct 2
Kashiwa Reysol v Guangzhou Evergrande 1-4, 0-4 (agg 1-8)
Seoul v Esteghlal 2-0, 2-2 (agg 4-2)

AFC CUP

Quarter-finals

1st legs - Sep 17; 2nd legs - Sep 24
Al Qadsia (Kuw) v Al Shorta (Syr) 0-0, 2-2 (agg 2-2, Al Qadsia on away goals)
East Bengal (Ind) v Semen Padang (Ins) 1-0, 1-1 (agg 2-1)
Kitchee (HK) v Al Faisaly (Jor) 1-2, 1-2 (agg 2-4)
New Radiant (Mdv) v Kuwait SC (Kuw) 2-7, 0-5 (agg 2-12)

Semi-finals

1st legs - Oct 1/2; 2nd legs - Oct 22
Al Qadsia v Al Faisaly 2-1, *2nd leg: Oct 22*
Kuwait SC v East Bengal 4-2, *2nd leg: Oct 22*

JAPAN

Sep 13: Kashiwa 1 Jubilo 3.
Sep 14: Shimizu 2 Nagoya 1; Ventforet 3 Kashima 0; Tokyo 3 Urawa 2; Sagan 1 Shonan 0; Kawasaki 2 Sanfrecce 0; Vegalta 6 Oita 0; Yokohama 1 Cerezo 1; Albirex 1 Omiya 0.
Sep 21: Jubilo 2 Kashima 3; Sanfrecce 2 Albirex 0; Omiya 0 Vegalta 2; Urawa 1 Ventforet 1; Oita 1 Shonan 2; Yokohama 1 Shimizu 0; Nagoya 0 Tokyo 2; Kawasaki 0 Sagan 1.
Sep 22: Cerezo 1 Kashiwa 1.
Sep 28: Vegalta 0 Yokohama 0; Kashiwa 1 Albirex 1; Shimizu 2 Ventforet 1; Sagan 0 Sanfrecce 2; Kashima 3 Oita 1; Shonan 2 Urawa 2; Cerezo 2 Jubilo 0; Omiya 2 Tokyo 5; Nagoya 1 Kawasaki 2.
Oct 5: Jubilo 1 Vegalta 1; Albirex 3 Sagan 1; Urawa 4 Omiya 0; Shonan 1 Nagoya 1; Sanfrecce 3 Shimizu 1; Oita 0 Cerezo 2; Tokyo 1 Kashima 4; Ventforet 0 Yokohama 0.
Oct 6: Kawasaki 3 Kashiwa 1.

JAPAN	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sanfrecce	28	16	5	7	46	26	53
Yokohama	28	15	8	5	45	26	53
Urawa	28	15	6	7	55	39	51
Kashima	28	15	5	8	50	43	50
Cerezo	28	12	11	5	42	24	47
Kawasaki	28	13	6	9	55	45	45
Tokyo	28	13	5	10	52	39	44
Vegalta	28	10	11	7	35	28	41
Albirex	28	12	4	12	37	37	40
Omiya	28	12	3	13	39	42	39
Kashiwa	28	10	8	10	44	51	38
Shimizu	28	11	5	12	37	48	38
Nagoya	28	10	7	11	39	40	37
Sagan	28	9	6	13	41	55	33
Ventforet	28	7	9	12	27	37	30
Shonan	28	6	7	15	29	51	25
Jubilo	28	3	11	14	36	47	20
Oita (R)	28	1	7	20	28	59	10

34-round season (17x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

KEY TO TABLES
(C) = champions
(Q) = qualified for next stage
(R) = relegated

FORTHCOMING FIXTURES

November 1/2/3
CAF Champions League Final, first leg
November 5 and 6
UEFA Champions League group games
November 7
Europa League group games
November 8
Under-17 World Cup Final
November 9
AFC Champions League Final, second leg: Guangzhou Evergrande v Seoul
November 8/9/10
CAF Champions League Final, second leg
November 15 to 20
Internationals, including World Cup play-offs and Asian Cup qualifiers
November 22/23/24
CAF Confederation Cup Final, first leg
November 26 and 27
UEFA Champions League group games
November 28
Europa League group games
November 29/30/December 1
CAF Confederation Cup Final, second leg

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THE QUALIFIERS ARGENTINA

Messi raises the stakes

Confident in qualifying, Alejandro Sabella's side have raised hopes of success in Brazil. By Joel Richards

New lease of life...Messi, celebrating a goal against Chile, is firing again for Argentina after being made captain

Historically, there are two ways for Argentina to qualify for a World Cup – and both are still fresh in the memory. There is the 2010 way, leaving it to a late goal by a substitute in a nail-biting final game. Or there is the 2014 way, securing a place at the finals with two matches to spare.

Argentina qualified for Brazil by scoring five times away to Paraguay. In the 2010 qualifiers, they lost that fixture with a dismal performance.

Alejandro Sabella, the pensive yet passionate national coach, took over after a poor Copa America performance in 2011 and swiftly had the side producing the results expected from the talent pool at his disposal. When he took over, FIFA ranked Argentina 10th in the world. They are now second.

Sabella's first major decision was to appoint Lionel Messi as captain, with the blessing of his predecessor, Javier Mascherano. Both players' performances for the national side have improved from that point on. More than any previous Argentina boss, Sabella has built a team to maximise Messi's performance levels. From not having scored in the previous 16 games for his country, Messi was soon averaging a goal per game for Sabella.

But the results did not come without criticism. Sabella's propensity to play a five-man defence for tricky away ties riled the local media, as did his penchant for calling up players he knows best from his spell in charge of Estudiantes. Suffering a first-ever loss to Venezuela also set alarm bells ringing – coupled with his admission on the eve of that defeat that he'd be happy to win "half-nil".

But after losing that game, and then drawing at home to Bolivia, the *Albiceleste* then took off.

They were unbeaten in 12 matches and scored three or more goals on five occasions. The strike force of Messi, Gonzalo Higuain and Sergio Aguero gelled, and between them they made up half of the qualifying group's top-six goalscorers. Together, they compromise arguably the most formidable forward line in the world...and steer attention away from question marks over the defence. Victories in friendlies against top European sides have also confirmed the side's prospects for next summer.

At the last tournament held in Brazil, in 1950, Uruguay ruined the hosts' plans to lift the trophy. Doing likewise and winning in Brazil this summer would eclipse Argentina's two previous titles – something that is not lost on captain Messi and co. **WS**

For the record

QUALIFYING CAMPAIGN

08.10.11	Chile (h)	4-1
12.10.11	Venezuela (a)	0-1
11.11.11	Bolivia (h)	1-1
15.11.11	Colombia (a)	2-1
02.06.12	Ecuador (h)	4-0
08.09.12	Paraguay (h)	3-1
12.09.12	Peru (a)	1-1
13.10.12	Uruguay (h)	3-0
17.10.12	Chile (a)	2-1
23.03.13	Venezuela (h)	3-0
26.03.13	Bolivia (a)	1-1
07.06.13	Colombia (h)	0-0
11.06.13	Ecuador (a)	1-1
11.09.13	Paraguay (a)	5-2
11.10.13	Peru (h)	-
15.10.13	Uruguay (a)	-

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Argentina	14	8	5	1	30	11	29
Colombia	14	8	2	4	22	9	26
Chile	14	8	0	6	24	21	24
Ecuador	14	6	4	4	18	14	22
Uruguay	14	6	4	4	22	22	22
Venezuela	15	5	4	6	13	19	19
Peru	14	4	2	8	15	22	14
Bolivia	15	2	5	8	16	29	11
Paraguay	14	3	2	9	15	28	11

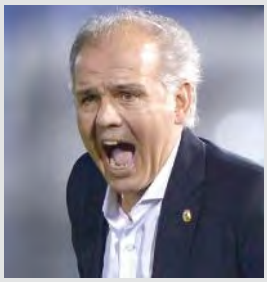
Players used in qualifiers

(* up to and inc 11.09.13)

FOURTEEN MATCHES
Lionel MESSI (1,143 mins)
TWELVE
Sergio ROMERO (1,080 mins)
ELEVEN
Javier MASCHERANO (970 mins), Angel DI MARIA (946 mins), Gonzalo HIGUAIN (859 mins)
TEN
Pablo ZABALETA (875 mins)
NINE
Federico FERNANDEZ (810 mins), Fernando GAGO (663 mins)
EIGHT
Ezequiel GARAY (720 mins), Marcos ROJO (697 mins)
SEVEN
Sergio AGUERO (488 mins), Ezequiel LAVEZZI (305 mins)
SIX
Hugo CAMPAGNARO (473 mins), Jose SOSA (293 mins), Rodrigo PALACIO (288 mins), Ever BANEGA (275 mins), Pablo GUINAZU (132 mins)
FOUR
Clemente RODRIGUEZ (360 mins), Nicolas BURDISSO (307 mins), Rodrigo BRANA (270 mins), Lucas BIGLIA (197 mins), Maxi RODRIGUEZ (19 mins)
THREE
Jose Maria BASANTA (270 mins)
TWO
Mariano ANDUJAR (180 mins), Martin DEMICHELIS (180 mins), Nicolas OTAMENDI (180 mins), Gino PERUZZI (180 mins), Walter MONTILLO (147 mins), Javier PASTORE (96 mins), Hernan BARCOS (15 mins)
ONE
Fabricio COLOCCINI (90 mins), Sebastian DOMINGUEZ (90 mins), Ricardo ALVAREZ (59 mins), Leandro DESABATO (53 mins), Leonardo PONZIO (29 mins), Fabian RINAUDO (18 mins), Enzo PEREZ (16 mins), Eduardo SALVIO (11 mins), Franco DI SANTO (5 mins), Jonas GUTIERREZ (5 mins)

Scorers in qualifiers
TEN GOALS
Lionel MESSI
NINE
Gonzalo HIGUAIN
FIVE
Sergio AGUERO
THREE
Angel DI MARIA
ONE
Ever BANEGA, Ezequiel LAVEZZI, Maxi RODRIGUEZ

The coach


Significant decisions...Sabella

Alejandro Sabella
The 58-year-old, who won eight caps as a player, coached Estudiantes to success in the 2009 Libertadores Cup before taking charge of the national side two years later. Previously worked with Argentina as assistant to Daniel Passarella, and also had a spell in the same capacity with Uruguay.

The key players

Heartbeat...Di Maria is effective at both ends of the field

Lionel Messi
Goalscorer, provider and captain, the Barcelona superstar instils fear in the opposition.

Angel Di Maria
One of Sabella's favourite pupils, he is just as important in attack as he is in defence.

Defensive strength...Garay

Midfield hub...Gago

Fernando Gago
The midfielder brings vision, a range of passing and performances that few others offer in the centre of the pitch.

Ezequiel Garay
In the centre of a defence that is still settling down, he leads with strength and know-how.

The unanswered questions

Is there a plan B?
Injuries and burn-out are two major concerns for Messi. The question of what would happen if he is not available does not have a straightforward answer.

Who will play at left-back?
There is still no outstanding candidate to fill the full-back role and Sabella could well have to improvise.

Could Mascherano step into the back line?
Having started out as a midfielder, the former captain has been successfully converted into a centre-half by Barcelona.

Role switch...Mascherano

Reasons to be cheerful

Lionel Messi
After a disappointing World Cup in South Africa – both collectively and personally – Brazil is the stage for Messi.

Goal scoring
The impressive arsenal at Sabella's disposal is a threat regardless of the opposition.

Motivation
Playing the tournament in Brazil represents an added incentive for Argentina and its supporters.

Reasons to be fearful

Prone to struggle...there are questions over the back line

The goalkeeper situation
Concentration lapses in recent qualifiers by Sergio Romero have opened the debate surrounding the team's no1.

Defence
Argentina's rearguard has question marks hanging over it, despite dominating games in qualifiers.

The quarter-final curse
Despite their quality, Argentina have not gone beyond the quarter-final stage since 1990.

THE QUALIFIERS HOLLAND

First home in Europe

Now Van Gaal's side must make up for their Euro 2012 disappointment. By Klaas-Jan Droppert

Main man...Van Persie (in white) scored eight goals in his first seven games of Holland's qualification campaign

Holland were the first European team to qualify for next year's World Cup – and that's a remarkable achievement considering where they started from.

After a disastrous Euro 2012 – marked by three group-game defeats and an early exit – new coach Louis Van Gaal has had to virtually build a new team from scratch. It was hardly surprising that he lost his first game, a friendly against neighbours Belgium, and expectations weren't exactly high when the qualifiers started.

However, the opener against Turkey proved vital. With the majority of the starting line-up coming from the Eredivisie – something that hadn't happened for decades in a competitive match – Holland won 2-0. They took an early lead through Robin Van Persie but looked shaky and were lucky not to concede before Luciano Narsingh sealed the deal in stoppage time.

The result gave the team and the charismatic Van Gaal a major boost, and wins away against Hungary and Romania, plus a home victory over minnows Andorra, put Holland in pole position before the end of the year.

Home wins against Estonia and Romania in March meant it was just a matter of time before the team's ticket was booked for Brazil.

That should have happened in Estonia, but they struggled in the Baltic and were lucky to clinch a 2-2 draw, thanks to a Van Persie penalty in stoppage time. In the end, a far from impressive 2-0 win in Andorra was enough to qualify unbeaten and with two games to spare.

Van Gaal, who took the job because a World Cup is missing from his impressive CV, is already looking to the future. "Now we must continue this performance at the World Cup," he says. "We will go there with mainly young players and just a few experienced ones. Our goal will be to survive the group phase."

Van Gaal's judgement is far more realistic than the Dutch FA's goal of reaching at least the semi-finals. "There are at least eight teams better than we are," he adds.

The big question is who will be in the team. Up until now, Van Gaal has selected his side on fitness and form, using a crop of inexperienced Eredivisie players and often changing the team.

Even a star like Wesley Sneijder, who was stripped of the captaincy during the qualification campaign, is not guaranteed a place. According to Van Gaal, the Galatasaray midfielder isn't fit and he has omitted the 29-year-old on several occasions so far.

Who will go to Brazil is still an open book, but Van Gaal has said that the friendly against France in March will reveal more. Until then no one can be sure whether Brazil will be a World Cup or holiday destination. **WS**

For the record

QUALIFICATION CAMPAIGN
GROUP D

07.09.12	Turkey (h)	2-0
11.09.12	Hungary (a)	4-1
12.10.12	Andorra (h)	3-0
16.10.12	Romania (a)	4-1
22.03.13	Estonia (h)	3-0
26.03.13	Romania (h)	4-0
06.09.13	Estonia (a)	2-2
10.09.13	Andorra (a)	2-0
11.10.13	Hungary (h)	-
15.10.13	Turkey (a)	-

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Holland	8	7	1	0	24	4	22
Hungary	8	4	2	2	18	12	14
Turkey	8	4	1	3	14	7	13
Romania	8	4	1	3	13	12	13
Estonia	8	2	1	5	6	16	7
Andorra	8	0	0	8	0	24	0

Players used in qualifiers

(* up to and inc 10.09.13)

EIGHT GAMES
Kevin STROOTMAN (708 mins)
SEVEN
Bruno MARTINS INDI (604 mins), Robin VAN PERSIE (581 mins), Jeremain LENS (568 mins)
SIX
Daryl JANMAAT (495 mins)
FIVE
Wesley SNEIJDER (384 mins), Ron VLAAR (364 mins)
FOUR
Arjen ROBBEN (360 mins), Stefan DE VRIJ (336 mins), Jetro WILLEMS (300 mins), Rafael VAN DER VAART (281 mins), Jordy CLASIE (155 mins)
THREE
Luciano NARSINGH (270 mins), Maarten STEKELENBURG (270 mins), John HEITINGA (266 mins), Ricardo VAN RHIJN (225 mins), Ruben SCHAKEN (197 mins), Jonathan DE GUZMAN (174 mins), Adam MAHER (74 mins), Dirk KUYT (55 mins)
TWO
Daley BLIND (180 mins), Nigel DE JONG (180 mins), Stijn SCHAARS (180 mins), Kenneth VERMEER (180 mins), Michel VORM (180 mins), Klaas-Jan HUNTELAAR (135 mins), Ibrahim AFELLAY (32 mins)
ONE
Tim KRUL (90 mins), Leroy FER (40 mins), Joris MATHIJSEN (26 mins), Jeffrey BRUMA (24 mins), Urby EMANUELSON (15 mins), Siem DE JONG (4 mins), Eljero ELIA (2 mins)

SCORERS IN QUALIFIERS
EIGHT GOALS
Robin VAN PERSIE
FOUR
Jeremain LENS, Rafael VAN DER VAART
TWO
Klaas-Jan HUNTELAAR, Bruno MARTINS INDI, Ruben SCHAKEN
ONE
Luciano NARSINGH, Arjen ROBBEN

The coach

World Cup opportunity...Van Gaal

Louis Van Gaal

One of the world's most successful coaches, the 62-year-old has won league titles with Ajax, Barcelona, AZ and Bayern Munich. He was in charge of Holland once before but stepped down after failing to qualify for the 2002 World Cup. He will leave after next year's finals in Brazil.

The key players

Vital...Van der Vaart is the side's creative force, but he can also score goals

Rafael Van der Vaart

For years he was Wesley Sneijder's understudy, but he has now surpassed his former Ajax team-mate as the national team's midfield creator. Chips in with important goals.

Arjen Robben

The only player Van Gaal will make an exception for when it comes to his dogmas on fitness and match practice. The 29-year-old can still create havoc among opposing defences.

Exception...Robben

Reliable...Martins Indi

Bruno Martins Indi

Born in Portugal to parents from Guinea Bissau, he arrived in Holland as a toddler. A physically strong defender who has never let Van Gaal down and has even scored a few goals.

Robin Van Persie

The absolute leader of the pack. One of the few regulars left in the national team, he was decisive in qualifying on more than one occasion.

The unanswered questions

Who will go to the finals?

Van Gaal used no fewer than 34 players in the first eight qualifying games – including four different goalkeepers – and a total of 44 players during the first 13 months of his reign as coach.

Is Wesley Sneijder in?

According to Van Gaal the midfielder isn't fit enough. He is also playing in a different role at Galatasaray these days.

Will Van Persie deliver when it matters?

Supreme at domestic and Champions League level for his club, but has never played a pivotal role at any of his previous four big tournaments.

Wait...Sneijder must prove his fitness

Reasons to be cheerful

New generation...Lens

Louis Van Gaal

The coach's record speaks for itself and he is the ideal man to get the best out of a young squad – just as he did when Ajax won the Champions League in 1995.

Plenty of talent

The future looks bright for Holland as a new generation of players, such as Jeremain Lens, has emerged and is gaining experience.

Qualifying run

An undefeated qualifying run means Holland will be a World Cup contender for the 10th time in 20 tournaments – not bad for a country of its size.

Reasons to be fearful

A shaky defence

The defence is made up of inexperienced Eredivisie players and looks vulnerable. It also lacks a leader.

Too inexperienced

With the majority of Van Gaal's squad coming from the inferior Dutch league, it's hard to see how Holland can match the likes of Spain, Germany, Brazil and Italy.

Missing the record

September's games against Estonia and Andorra should have seen Holland equal Germany's World Cup qualifying record of 16 consecutive wins. But they floundered and could only manage a draw in Estonia. Why does that always happen to Holland when there is something at stake?

THE QUALIFIERS | ITALY

Azzurri through in style

Qualification was nice and straightfoward for Prandelli's side. By Paddy Agnew

Heading for Brazil...Chiellini (centre) and Balzaretti keep out Denmark striker Nicklas Bendtner

When Mario Balotelli slotted home the penalty that wrapped up the 2-1 win against the Czech Republic in Turin in September, Italy had qualified for the World Cup finals with two matches still to play.

In a manner similar to their passage to Euro 2012, Cesare Prandelli's side did it in style, dominating their group from start to finish. Arguably, their only real moment of worry lasted just six minutes: the length of time it took the team to equalise in their opening 2-2 draw away to Bulgaria in September last year, after goalkeeper Gigi Buffon had made a rare error that saw Italy trail 1-0.

That draw set up a highly successful autumn 2012, climaxed by a 3-1 win at the San Siro against Denmark, a team who are always capable of causing problems. That game, marked by an excellent performance from Balotelli, proved beyond doubt that the Euro 2012 finalists intended to carry on from where they left off in Kiev.

Since taking over from Marcello Lippi in 2010, Prandelli has accustomed Italy not only to anxiety-free qualifying groups but also to quality football.

It could be argued that the *Azzurri's* impressive showing owed much to a less-than-imposing group in which their three strongest opponents – Bulgaria, Denmark and the Czech Republic – all in their different ways, seemed a long way short of Stoichkov's Bulgaria, the Denmark of Laudrup and the Nedved Czech Republic of yesteryear.

However, Italy's performances in the Confederations Cup in Brazil this summer – and in particular the way they played in their penalty shoot-out defeat by Spain in an epic semi-final – was proof that this is, in the words of Prandelli, "a serious team".

As for the qualifiers, that "serious" aspect made itself very obvious in the Turin game against the Czech Republic.

Having conceded a counter-attacking goal to the Czechs, created by the brilliance of Arsenal's Tomas Rosicky and finished by Aston Villa's Libor Kozak, Italy might have been in trouble. As Balotelli missed four first-half chances, it seemed that qualification would be for another day.

Italy, however, stuck to their task, equalised through Giorgio Chiellini – following an uncharacteristic mistake from Petr Cech in goal – and then wrapped it all up through, appropriately, Balotelli. Mission accomplished, well ahead of time. **WS**

For the record

QUALIFICATION CAMPAIGN
GROUP B

07.09.12	Bulgaria (a)	2-2
11.09.12	Malta (h)	2-0
12.10.12	Armenia (a)	3-1
16.10.12	Denmark (h)	3-1
26.03.13	Malta (a)	2-0
07.06.13	Czech Republic (a)	0-0
06.09.13	Bulgaria (h)	1-0
10.09.13	Czech Republic (h)	2-1
11.10.13	Denmark (a)	-
15.10.13	Armenia (h)	-

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy	8	6	2	0	15	5	20
Bulgaria	8	3	4	1	13	6	13
Denmark	8	3	3	2	9	10	12
Cz Rep	8	2	3	3	8	8	9
Armenia	8	3	0	5	8	10	9
Malta	8	1	0	7	4	18	3

Players used in qualifiers

(* up to and inc 10.09.13)

EIGHT GAMES
Andrea PIRLO (686 mins)
SEVEN
Leonardo BONUCCI (630 mins), Gianluigi BUFFON (630 mins)
SIX
Andrea BARZAGLI (540 mins), Daniele DE ROSSI (540 mins), Claudio MARCHISIO (525 mins), Emanuele GIACCHERINI (217 mins)
FIVE
Pablo OSVALDO (361 mins), Riccardo MONTOLIVO (439 mins), Antonio CANDREVA (226 mins)
FOUR
Giorgio CHIELLINI (360 mins), Ignazio ABATE (350 mins), Mario BALOTELLI (337 mins), Christian MAGGIO (280 mins), Sebastian GIOVINCO (186 mins)
THREE
Stephan EL SHAARAWY (151 mins), Mattia DESTRO (100 mins)
TWO
Federico PELUSO (111 mins), Lorenzo INSIGNE (109 mins), Alberto GILARDINO (94 mins), Thiago MOTTA (94 mins), Angelo OGBONNA (81 mins), Alessandro DIAMANTI (71 mins)
ONE
Federico BALZARETTI (90 mins), Mattia CASSANI (90 mins), Domenico CRISCITO (90 mins), Morgan DE SANCTIS (90 mins), Mattia DE SCIGLIO (90 mins), Antonio NOCERINO (90 mins), Manuel PASQUAL (78 mins), Luca ANTONELLI (62 mins), Davide ASTORI (28 mins), Giampaolo PAZZINI (21 mins), Alberto AQUILANI (18 mins), Alessio CERCI (14 mins)

SCORERS IN QUALIFYING
FOUR GOALS
Mario BALOTELLI
THREE
Pablo OSVALDO
TWO
Daniele DE ROSSI
ONE
Giorgio CHIELLINI, Mattia DESTRO, Alberto GILARDINO, Riccardo MONTOLIVO, Federico PELUSO, Andrea PIRLO

The coach

Visionary...Prandelli

Cesare Prandelli
No one, it seems, manages to get better performances out of Mario Balotelli than Prandelli. That is a tribute not just to the 56-year-old's immense coaching skills, but even more so to his broad-minded vision.

The key players

Leading by example...skipper Buffon

Gigi Buffon
As a captain of the national side, Buffon is not shy of standing up to be counted at polemical moments. As a goalkeeper, he remains the very rock on which Prandelli's team is founded.

Giorgio Chiellini
Another foundation stone of the side, he brings true central-defensive grit, left-back versatility and a huge understanding with his Juventus team-mate Buffon.

Versatile...De Rossi

Firebrand...Balotelli

Daniele De Rossi
Prandelli converted the midfielder into a central defender at Euro 2012. In either position, he provides vision as well as ball-winning and distribution skills.

Mario Balotelli
The ace in Prandelli's pack, the coach will now be hoping that he plays every game "as he did in the semi-final in Poland". So does the whole of Italy.

The unanswered questions

Will Prandelli stay?
Speculation over what lies ahead for the coach might unsettle the side. The rumour that he might move on to a top club side after the finals could either prove to be irrelevant or a costly distraction.

Can the veteran Pirlo do it one more time?
No player has given more to the Italian cause in the last decade than Andrea Pirlo – but he will be 35 years of age in Brazil next summer.

Has the coach lost faith in the new wave?
Against the Czech Republic, Prandelli started with nine players from the Lippi era, recalling Thiago Motta and Manuel Pasqual – the latter after a six-year absence.

Time marches on...Pirlo

Reasons to be cheerful

The man in charge
Prandelli, the man who rehabilitated Italy after the disaster of the 2010 World Cup, is quite simply a great coach with a vision that goes beyond football.

Finals history
When it comes to a finals tournament, Italy more often than not deliver. Three World Cup Finals and two European Finals in the last 32 years are hardly a coincidence.

Boost...Italy's third-place finish at Confederations Cup

Confederations Cup 2013
Italy's extremely positive showing in this summer's tournament in Brazil was not only a morale boost in itself. The whole experience will obviously serve as a great trial run for when they return to South America next summer.

Reasons to be fearful

The absence of Rossi
Prandelli makes no secret of his high regard for Giuseppe Rossi, but there are doubts over whether the striker will be fully recovered from the injury that kept him out of Euro 2012.

Balotelli's temperament
Can Italy's most explosive player keep his cool, stop arguing with referees and generally avoid controversy during the finals?

A lack of first-team players
Will some of the younger squad members that have been favoured by Prandelli in the past – such as Marco Verratti, Lorenzo Insigne, Stephan El Shaarawy, Mattia Destro and Alessandro Florenzi – get enough club football this season to earn themselves a call-up for Brazil?

THE QUALIFIERS USA

Workmanlike progress

Reaching Brazil was a no-frills trip for Klinsmann's side. By Paul Gardner

Job done...Gonzalez salutes the crowd after the USA secure a ticket to Brazil 2014 with victory over Mexico

If the USA's early World Cup qualification – which arrived with two games to spare – suggests a dominant performance by coach Jurgen Klinsmann's team, that was far from the case. The clinching win, a 2-0 victory over Mexico, owed more to the collapse of the opposition than anything the US did. Four days earlier, Klinsmann's side had been soundly beaten, 3-1, by Costa Rica.

The USA's campaign had a no-frills, workmanlike air to it, with the team winning games by slim margins. This was a primarily defensive side, with 12 goals conceded in 14 games and only 21 scored. In the eight games played in the final round before qualification, the USA never managed to score more than twice. The results were, narrowly, what were required, but there was little about which to get excited in their stingy performances.

There was also the memorable – for all the wrong reasons – 1-0 win over Costa Rica. It was a triumph for gamesmanship as the US had scheduled the game for Denver, hoping that the cold weather would unsettle the visitors. That wish was duly granted with a blizzard and a farcical game that should never have started, never mind allowed to continue.

There remains much work for Klinsmann to do. His team never turned in a dominant performance and was never reliably consistent. Despite conceding less than a goal per game, the USA's defence, particularly in the centre, always had a precarious edge to it.

Of the 36 players used by Klinsmann, half played four or fewer games. The team-building that should surely have progressed during the qualifying campaign looks like a work in progress that has barely begun. **WS**

For the record

QUALIFYING CAMPAIGN
THIRD ROUND, GROUP A

09.06.12	Antigua & Barbuda (h)	3-1
13.06.12	Guatemala (a)	1-1
08.09.12	Jamaica (a)	1-2
12.09.12	Jamaica (h)	1-0
13.10.12	Antigua & Barbuda (a)	2-1
17.10.12	Guatemala (h)	3-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
USA	6	4	1	1	11	6	13
Jamaica	6	3	1	2	9	6	10
Guatemala	6	3	1	2	9	8	10
Antigua&B	6	0	1	5	4	13	1

FOURTH ROUND

06.02.13	Honduras (a)	1-2
23.03.13	Costa Rica (h)	1-0
27.03.13	Mexico (a)	0-0
08.06.13	Jamaica (a)	2-1
12.06.13	Panama (h)	2-0
19.06.13	Honduras (h)	1-0
07.09.13	Costa Rica (a)	1-3
10.09.13	Mexico (h)	2-0
11.10.13	Jamaica (h)	-
15.10.13	Panama (a)	-

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
USA	8	5	1	2	10	6	16
Costa Rica	8	4	3	1	11	5	15
Honduras	8	3	2	3	10	10	11
Panama	8	1	5	2	7	9	8
Mexico	8	1	5	2	4	6	8
Jamaica	8	0	4	4	3	9	4

Players used in qualifiers

(* up to and inc 11.09.13)

FOURTEEN GAMES
Clint DEMPSEY (1,260 mins)
TWELVE
Tim HOWARD (1,080 mins), Geoff CAMERON (901 mins)
ELEVEN
Jermaine JONES (846 mins), Jozy ALTIDORE (634 mins)
TEN
Graham ZUSI (631 mins), Eddie JOHNSON (579 mins), Michael BRADLEY (900 mins)
NINE
Fabian JOHNSON (729 mins)
EIGHT
Omar GONZALEZ (720 mins), Herculez GOMEZ (608 mins), Maurice EDU (414 mins)
SIX
DaMarcus BEASLEY (540 mins), Clarence GOODSON (495 mins)
FIVE
Matt BESLER (450 mins), Carlos BOCANEGRA (450 mins), Steve CHERUNDOLO (450 mins), Danny WILLIAMS (326 mins)
FOUR
Landon DONOVAN (359 mins), Kyle BECKERMAN (149 mins)
THREE
Brad EVANS (270 mins), Michael PARKHURST (225 mins) Sacha KLJESTAN (70 mins), Brek SHEA (52 mins), Brad DAVIS (39 mins)
TWO
Brad GUZAN (180 mins), Francisco TORRES (147 mins), Terrence BOYD (29 mins), Edgar CASTILLO (17 mins), Joe CORONA (4 mins)
ONE
Timothy CHANDLER (90 mins), Michael OROZCO (90 mins), Alejandro BEDOYA (83 mins), Oguchi ONYEWU (33 mins), Alan GORDON (19 mins), Mikkel DISKERUD (15 mins)

SCORERS IN QUALIFIERS
EIGHT GOALS
Clint DEMPSEY
FOUR
Eddie JOHNSON
THREE
Jozy ALTIDORE
TWO
Carlos BOCANEGRA, Herculez GOMEZ
ONE
Landon DONOVAN, Brad EVANS

The coach

Cautious...Klinsmann

Jurgen Klinsmann
A surprisingly cautious approach to the qualifiers should not hide the major achievements in friendlies: a first win over Mexico, a first win over Italy in Italy, and a stunning 4-3 win over Bosnia. His World Cup experience with Germany in 2006 will have real value next summer.

The key players

Welcome return...Donovan

Landon Donovan
This will be his fourth World Cup and the 31-year-old's return to the squad – he did not play in the early qualifiers as he took a four-month break from the game – will give the team a huge boost. The most inspirational of the American players and the scorer of vital goals.

Michael Bradley
The classy midfield anchor of the team. While hardly a speedster, he is quick to intercept passes and equally prompt at getting forward to join in attacking moves. His presence has become important in upping the level of the team's play.

Driving force...Bradley

Creativity...Dempsey

Clint Dempsey
Given the captain's armband by Klinsmann, he was the only player to play in all of the first 14 games. He scored eight goals, but it is his creativity and skill that rattles opposing defenders.

The unanswered questions

How many non-Americans?
Klinsmann has used eight foreign-born players, six of them German-Americans. This preference is seen by some as a potential breeder of squad unrest.

Should Jermaine Jones even be in the squad?
Jones has a bad disciplinary record with his Bundesliga club Schalke. Klinsmann has repeatedly stuck by him, but his propensity to pick up cards is not compensated by his limited skills.

Who will score the goals?
Dempsey does not like tight marking, while Jozy Altidore may suffer if his club side, Sunderland, continue to struggle.

Suspect discipline...Jones

Reasons to be cheerful

Lack of pressure
As usual, the USA is not a country where public pressure for results can overwhelm the team. No USA coach has ever faced a hostile press conference. Qualification for the knockout round will be considered an achievement and the overall lack of pressure should help the team's form.

Experience...Guzan

Good goalkeepers
Tim Howard and Brad Guzan both have extensive Premier League experience, while Nick Rimando is the best of the Americans playing in Major League Soccer.

Optimism
With each World Cup the feeling grows that the USA is on the edge of a breakthrough. The confidence that results can be achieved against ostensibly superior teams is now part of the make-up of US players.

Reasons to be fearful

Reliance on the keeper
The strength of US goalkeeping can work negatively if the team has to rely on the keeper to keep them in games or dig them out of holes.

Central defence
The biggest problem throughout the qualifiers was finding a solid and stable pair of centre-backs. Omar Gonzalez, despite some bad errors, looks like a fixture, but his ideal partner has yet to make a claim. The likely candidates are Matt Besler or Geoff Cameron, with Clarence Goodson next in line, or maybe a late arrival, such as 20-year-old John Brooks from Hertha Berlin.

Discipline
If Klinsmann insists on using him, can Jermaine Jones be trusted not to get himself sent off?

PREMIER LEAGUE SQUADS 2013-14

(Ages correct as of 18.10.13)

ARSENAL

GOALKEEPERS
21 Lukasz FABIANSKI (Pol) (28) 18.04.85
1 Wojciech SZCZESNY (Pol) (23) 18.04.90
13 Emiliano VIVIANO (Ita) (27) 01.12.85

DEFENDERS
28 Kieran GIBBS (24) 26.09.89
25 Carl JENKINSON (21) 08.02.92
6 Laurent KOSCIELNY (Fra) (28) 10.09.85
4 Per MERTESACKER (Ger) (29) 29.09.84
17 Nacho MONREAL (Spa) (27) 26.02.86
3 Bacary SAGNA (Fra) (30) 14.02.83
5 Thomas VERMAELEN (Blg) (27) 14.11.85
57 Nico YENNARIS (20) 23.05.93

MIDFIELDERS
8 Mikel ARTETA (Spa) (31) 26.03.82
19 Santi CAZORLA (Spa) (28) 13.12.84
24 Abou DIABY (Fra) (27) 11.05.86
20 Mathieu FLAMINI (Fra) (29) 07.03.84
26 Emmanuel FRIMPONG (Gha) (21) 10.01.92
44 Serge GNABRY (Ger) (18) 14.07.95
31 Ryo MIYAICHI (Jap) (20) 14.12.92
15 Alex OXLADE-CHAMBERLAIN (20) 15.08.93
11 Mesut OZIL (Ger) (25) 15.10.88
16 Aaron RAMSEY (Wal) (22) 26.12.90
7 Tomas ROSICKY (CzR) (33) 04.10.80
10 Jack WILSHERE (21) 01.01.92
58 Gedion ZELALEM (Ger) (16) 26.01.97

FORWARDS
37 Chuba AKPOM (18) 09.10.95
23 Nicklas BENDTNER (Den) (25) 16.01.88
12 Olivier GIROUD (Fra) (27) 30.09.86
30 PARK Chu-Young (Sko) (28) 10.07.85
9 Lukas PODOLSKI (Ger) (28) 04.06.85
22 Yaya SANOGO (Fra) (20) 27.01.93
14 Theo WALCOTT (24) 16.03.89

MANAGER
Arsene WENGER (Fra) (63) 22.10.49

ASTON VILLA

GOALKEEPERS
35 Shay GIVEN (RoI) (37) 20.04.76
1 Brad GUZAN (USA) (29) 09.09.84
39 Benjamin SIEGRIST (Swi) (21) 31.01.92
13 Jed STEER (21) 23.09.92

DEFENDERS
2 Nathan BAKER (22) 23.04.91
3 Joe BENNETT (23) 28.03.90
6 Ciaran CLARK (RoI) (24) 26.09.89
41 Alan HUTTON (Sco) (28) 30.11.84
34 Matthew LOWTON (24) 09.06.89
14 Antonio LUNA (Spa) (22) 17.03.91
5 Jores OKORE (Den) (21) 11.08.92
37 Enda STEVENS (RoI) (23) 09.07.90
4 Ron VLAAR (Hol) (28) 16.02.85

MIDFIELDERS
12 Marc ALBRIGHTON (23) 18.11.89
16 Fabian DELPH (23) 21.11.89
8 Karim EL AHMADI (Mor) (28) 27.01.85
22 Gary GARDNER (21) 29.06.92
17 Chris HERD (Aus) (24) 04.04.89
36 Charles N'ZOGBIA (Fra) (27) 28.05.86
18 Yacouba SYLLA (Fra) (22) 29.11.90
15 Ashley WESTWOOD (23) 01.04.90

FORWARDS
11 Gabriel AGBONLAHOR (27) 13.10.86
7 Leandro BACUNA (Hol) (22) 21.08.91
20 Christian BENTEKE (Blg) (22) 03.12.90
21 Jordan BOWERY (22) 02.07.91
9 Nicklas HELENIUS (Den) (22) 08.05.91
27 Libor KOZAK (CzR) (24) 30.05.89
24 Aleksander TONEV (Bul) (23) 03.02.90
10 Andreas WEIMANN (Aut) (22) 05.08.91

MANAGER
Paul LAMBERT (Sco) (44) 07.08.69

CARDIFF CITY

GOALKEEPERS
32 Joe LEWIS (26) 06.10.87
1 David MARSHALL (Sco) (28) 05.03.85
33 Simon MOORE (23) 19.05.90

DEFENDERS
30 Maxi AMONDARAIN (Uru) (20) 22.01.93
12 John BRAYFORD (25) 29.12.87
4 Steven CAULKER (21) 29.12.91
2 Matthew CONNOLLY (26) 24.09.87
5 Mark HUDSON (31) 30.03.82
3 Andrew TAYLOR (27) 01.08.86
6 Ben TURNER (25) 21.01.88

MIDFIELDERS
19 Don COWIE (Sco) (30) 15.02.83
17 Aron GUNNARSSON (Ice) (24) 22.04.89
42 Declan JOHN (Wal) (18) 30.06.95
13 KIM Bo-kyung (SKo) (24) 06.10.89
26 Filip KISS (Slk) (23) 13.10.90
8 Gary MEDEL (Chl) (26) 03.08.87
18 Jordon MUTCH (21) 02.12.91
16 Craig NOONE (25) 17.11.87
28 Kevin THEOPHILE-CATHERINE (Fra) (23) 28.10.89
7 Peter WHITTINGHAM (28) 08.10.84

FORWARDS
39 Craig BELLAMY (Wal) (34) 13.07.79
10 Fraizer CAMPBELL (26) 13.09.87
9 Andreas CORNELIUS (Den) (20) 16.03.93
15 Rudy GESTEDE (Ben) (25) 10.10.88
20 Joe MASON (RoI) (22) 13.05.91
23 Nicky MAYNARD (26) 11.12.86
11 Peter ODEMWINGIE (Nga) (32) 15.07.81
14 Tommy SMITH (33) 22.05.80
27 Etien VELIKONJA (Sln) (24) 26.12.88

MANAGER
Malky MACKAY (Sco) (41) 19.02.72

CHELSEA

GOALKEEPERS
46 Jamal BLACKMAN (19) 27.10.93
1 Petr CECH (CzR) (31) 20.05.82
40 HILARIO (Por) (37) 21.10.75
23 Mark SCHWARZER (Aus) (41) 06.10.72

DEFENDERS
57 Nathan AKE (Hol) (18) 18.02.95
28 Cesar AZPILICUETA (Spa) (24) 28.08.89
34 Ryan BERTRAND (24) 05.08.89
24 Gary CAHILL (27) 19.12.85
3 Ashley COLE (32) 20.12.80
2 Branislav IVANOVIC (Ser) (29) 22.02.84
33 Tomas KALAS (CzR) (20) 15.05.93
4 David LUIZ (Bra) (26) 22.04.87
26 John TERRY (32) 07.12.80

MIDFIELDERS
15 Kevin DE BRUYNE (Blg) (22) 28.06.91
5 Michael ESSIEN (Gha) (30) 03.12.82
17 Eden HAZARD (Blg) (22) 07.01.91
8 Frank LAMPARD (35) 20.06.78
12 John Obi MIKEL (Nga) (26) 22.04.87
11 OSCAR (Bra) (22) 09.09.91
7 RAMIRES (Bra) (26) 24.03.87
16 Marco VAN GINKEL (Hol) (20) 01.12.92
22 WILLIAN (Bra) (25) 09.08.88

FORWARDS
19 Demba BA (Sen) (28) 25.05.85
29 Samuel ETO'O (Cam) (32) 10.03.81
10 Juan MATA (Spa) (25) 28.04.88
14 Andre SCHURRLE (Ger) (22) 06.11.90
9 Fernando TORRES (Spa) (29) 20.03.84

MANAGER
Jose MOURINHO (Por) (50) 26.01.63

CRYSTAL PALACE

GOALKEEPERS
25 Neil ALEXANDER (Sco) (35) 10.03.78
34 Lewis PRICE (Wal) (29) 19.07.84
1 Julian SPERONI (Arg) (34) 18.05.79

DEFENDERS
27 Damien DELANEY (RoI) (32) 29.07.81
19 Danny GABBIDON (Wal) (34) 08.08.79
22 Jack HUNT (22) 06.12.90
3 Adrian MARIAPPA (Jam) (27) 03.10.86
5 Patrick McCARTHY (RoI) (30) 31.05.83
21 Dean MOXEY (27) 14.01.86
2 Joel WARD (23) 29.10.89

MIDFIELDERS
46 Barry BANNAN (Sco) (23) 01.12.89
7 Yannick BOLASIE (DRC) (24) 24.05.89
6 Jose CAMPANA (Spa) (20) 30.05.93
8 Kagisho DIKGACOI (Saf) (28) 24.11.84
10 Owen GARVAN (RoI) (25) 29.01.88
31 Adlene GUEDIOURA (Alg) (27) 12.11.85
15 Mile JEDINAK (Aus) (29) 03.08.84
12 Stuart O'KEEFE (22) 04.03.91
28 Jimmy KEBE (Mli) (29) 19.01.84
4 Jonathan PARR (Nor) (24) 21.10.88
13 Jason PUNCHEON (27) 26.06.86
14 Jerome THOMAS (30) 23.03.83
20 Jonathan WILLIAMS (Wal) (20) 09.10.93

FORWARDS
29 Marouane CHAMAKH (Mor) (29) 10.01.84
16 Dwight GAYLE (22) 20.10.90
24 Elliot GRANDIN (Fra) (26) 17.10.87
30 Cameron JEROME (27) 14.08.86
17 Glenn MURRAY (30) 25.09.83
9 Kevin PHILLIPS (40) 25.07.73
33 Ibra SEKAJA (Uga) (20) 31.10.92
18 Aaron WILBRAHAM (33) 21.10.79

MANAGER
Ian HOLLOWAY (50) 12.03.63

EVERTON

GOALKEEPERS
24 Tim HOWARD (USA) (34) 06.03.79
1 Joel ROBLES (Spa) (23) 17.06.90
46 Mason SPRINGTHORPE (18) 01.11.94

DEFENDERS
32 Antolin ALCARAZ (Par) (31) 30.07.82
3 Leighton BAINES (28) 11.12.84
23 Seamus COLEMAN (RoI) (24) 11.10.88
15 Sylvain DISTIN (Fra) (35) 16.12.77
5 John HEITINGA (Hol) (29) 15.11.83
2 Tony HIBBERT (32) 20.02.81
6 Phil JAGIELKA (31) 17.08.82
26 John STONES (19) 28.05.94
40 Ibou TOURAY (18) 24.12.94

MIDFIELDERS
20 Ross BARKLEY (19) 05.12.93
18 Gareth BARRY (32) 23.02.81
4 Darron GIBSON (RoI) (25) 25.10.87
31 Matthew KENNEDY (Sco) (18) 01.11.94
33 John LUNDSTRAM (19) 18.02.94
16 James McCARTHY (RoI) (22) 12.11.90
21 Leon OSMAN (32) 17.05.81
8 Bryan OVIEDO (CR) (23) 18.02.90
22 Steven PIENAAR (SAf) (31) 17.03.82

FORWARDS
10 Gerard DEULOFEU (Spa) (19) 13.03.94
19 Magaye GUEYE (Sen) (23) 06.07.90
7 Nikica JELAVIC (Cro) (27) 27.08.85
9 Arouna KONE (IvC) (29) 11.11.83
17 Romelu LUKAKU (Blg) (20) 13.05.93
35 Conor McALENY (21) 12.08.92
11 Kevin MIRALLAS (Blg) (26) 05.10.87
14 Steven NAISMITH (Sco) (27) 14.09.86
27 Apostolos VELLIOS (Gre) (21) 08.01.92

MANAGER
Roberto MARTINEZ (Spa) (40) 13.07.73

FULHAM

GOALKEEPERS
38 Neil ETHERIDGE (Phi) (23) 07.02.90
1 Maarten STEKELENBURG (Hol) (31) 22.09.82
13 David STOCKDALE (28) 20.09.85

DEFENDERS
35 Fernando AMOREBIETA (Ven) (28) 21.03.85
17 Matthew BRIGGS (22) 09.03.91
5 Brede HANGELAND (Nor) (32) 20.06.81
18 Aaron HUGHES (NI) (33) 08.11.79
27 Sascha RIETHER (Ger) (30) 23.03.83
3 John Arne RIISE (Nor) (33) 24.09.80
4 Philippe SENDEROS (Swi) (28) 14.02.85
22 Elsad ZVEROTIC (Mne) (26) 31.10.86

MIDFIELDERS
42 Charles BANYA (20) 18.09.93
23 Derek BOATENG (Gha) (30) 02.05.83
30 Chris DAVID (Hol) (20) 06.03.93
16 Damien DUFF (RoI) (34) 02.03.79
44 Jack GRIMMER (Sco) (19) 01.02.94
11 Alex KACANIKLIC (Swe) (22) 13.08.91
14 Giorgos KARAGOUNIS (Gre) (36) 06.03.77
8 Pajtim KASAMI (Swi) (21) 02.06.92
36 MESCA (Por) (20) 06.05.93
28 Scott PARKER (33) 13.10.80
15 Kieran RICHARDSON (28) 21.10.84
7 Steve SIDWELL (30) 14.12.82
19 Adel TAARABT (Mor) (24) 24.05.89

FORWARDS
39 Darren BENT (29) 06.02.84
9 Dimitar BERBATOV (Bul) (32) 30.01.81
24 Ashkan DEJAGAH (Irn) (27) 05.07.86
20 Hugo RODALLEGA (Col) (28) 25.07.85
10 Bryan RUIZ (CR) (28) 18.08.85
43 Muamer TANKOVIC (Swe) (18) 22.02.95

MANAGER
Martin JOL (Hol) (57) 16.01.56

HULL CITY

GOALKEEPERS
35 Joe CRACKNELL (19) 05.06.94
22 Steve HARPER (38) 14.03.75
16 Eldin JAKUPOVIC (Swi) (29) 02.10.84
1 Allan McGREGOR (Sco) (31) 31.01.82

DEFENDERS
4 Alex BRUCE (NI) (29) 28.09.84
5 James CHESTER (24) 23.01.89
6 Curtis DAVIES (28) 15.03.85
19 Joe DUDGEON (NI) (22) 26.11.90
23 Abdoulaye FAYE (Sen) (35) 26.02.78
3 Maynor FIGUEROA (Hon) (30) 02.05.83
15 Paul McSHANE (RoI) (27) 06.01.86
2 Liam ROSENIOR (29) 09.07.84

MIDFIELDERS
17 George BOYD (Sco) (28) 02.10.85
11 Robbie BRADY (RoI) (21) 14.01.92
27 Ahmed ELMOHAMADY (Egy) (26) 09.09.87
8 Tom HUDDLESTONE (26) 28.12.86
10 Robert KOREN (Sln) (33) 20.09.80
14 Jake LIVERMORE (23) 14.11.89
7 David MEYLER (RoI) (24) 29.05.89
29 Stephen QUINN (RoI) (27) 04.04.86
36 Dougie WILSON (NI) (19) 03.03.94

FORWARDS
24 Sone ALUKO (24) 19.02.89
18 GEDO (Egy) (28) 30.10.84
9 Danny GRAHAM (28) 12.08.85
32 Calaum JAHRALDO-MARTIN (A&B) (20) 27.04.93
21 Aaron McLEAN (30) 25.05.83
33 Nick PROSCHWITZ (Ger) (26) 28.11.86
20 Yannick SAGBO (IvC) (25) 12.04.88

MANAGER
Steve BRUCE (52) 31.12.60

LIVERPOOL

GOALKEEPERS
1 Brad JONES (Aus) (31) 19.03.82
22 Simon MIGNOLET (Blg) (25) 06.03.88
52 Danny WARD (Wal) (20) 22.06.93

DEFENDERS
5 Daniel AGGER (Den) (28) 12.12.84
20 Aly CISSOKHO (Fra) (26) 15.09.87
16 Sebastian COATES (Uru) (23) 07.10.90
3 Jose ENRIQUE (Spa) (27) 23.01.86
38 Jon FLANAGAN (20) 21.01.93
26 Tiago ILORI (Por) (20) 26.02.93
2 Glen JOHNSON (29) 23.08.84
34 Martin KELLY (23) 27.04.90
43 Ryan McLAUGHLIN (NI) (19) 03.09.94
17 Mamadou SAKHO (Fra) (23) 13.02.90
37 Martin SKRTEL (Slk) (28) 15.12.84
4 Kolo TOURE (IvC) (32) 19.03.81
47 Andre WISDOM (20) 09.05.93

MIDFIELDERS
24 Joe ALLEN (Wal) (23) 14.03.90
10 Philippe COUTINHO (Bra) (21) 12.06.92
8 Steven GERRARD (33) 30.05.80
14 Jordan HENDERSON (23) 17.06.90
21 LUCAS Leiva (Bra) (26) 09.01.87
31 Raheem STERLING (18) 08.12.94

FORWARDS
6 Luis ALBERTO (Spa) (21) 28.09.92
9 Iago ASPAS (Spa) (26) 11.08.87
33 Jordon IBE (17) 08.12.95
50 Adam MORGAN (19) 21.04.94
12 Victor MOSES (Nga) (22) 12.12.90
48 Jerome SINCLAIR (17) 20.09.96
15 Daniel STURRIDGE (24) 01.09.89
7 Luis SUAREZ (Uru) (26) 24.01.87
36 Samed YESIL (Ger) (19) 25.05.94

MANAGER
Brendan RODGERS (NI) (40) 26.01.73

MAN CITY

GOALKEEPERS
1 Joe HART (26) 19.04.87
30 Costel PANTILIMON (Rom) (26) 01.02.87
29 Richard WRIGHT (35) 05.11.77

DEFENDERS
38 Dedryck BOYATA (Blg) (23) 08.09.90
22 Gael CLICHY (Fra) (28) 26.07.85
26 Martin DEMICHELIS (Arg) (32) 20.12.80
13 Aleksandar KOLAROV (Ser) (27) 10.11.85
4 Vincent KOMPANY (Blg) (27) 10.04.86
6 Joleon LESCOTT (31) 16.08.82
33 Matija NASTASIC (Ser) (20) 28.03.93
2 Micah RICHARDS (25) 24.06.88
5 Pablo ZABALETA (Arg) (28) 16.01.85

MIDFIELDERS
25 FERNANDINHO (Bra) (28) 04.05.85
14 Javi GARCIA (Spa) (26) 08.02.87
52 Emyr HUWS (Wal) (20) 30.09.93
64 Marcos LOPES (Por) (17) 28.12.95
7 James MILNER (27) 04.01.86
8 Samir NASRI (Fra) (26) 26.06.87
15 Jesus NAVAS (Spa) (27) 21.11.85
17 Jack RODWELL (22) 11.03.91
21 David SILVA (Spa) (27) 08.01.86
42 Yaya TOURE (IvC) (30) 13.05.83

FORWARDS
16 Sergio AGUERO (Arg) (25) 02.06.88
47 Harry BUNN (20) 21.11.92
51 Adam DRURY (20) 21.09.93
10 Edin DZEKO (Bos) (27) 17.03.86
60 John GUIDETTI (Swe) (21) 15.04.92
53 Alex HENSHALL (19) 15.02.94
35 Stevan JOVETIC (Mne) (23) 02.11.89
9 Alvaro NEGREDO (Spa) (28) 20.08.85
43 Alex NIMELY (22) 11.05.91

MANAGER
Manuel PELLEGRINI (Chl) (60) 16.09.53

MAN UNITED

GOALKEEPERS		
40	Ben AMOS	(23) 10.04.90
1	David DE GEA (Spa)	(22) 07.11.90
13	Anders LINDEGAARD (Den)	(29) 13.04.84
DEFENDERS		
28	Alexander BUTTNER (Hol)	(24) 11.02.89
6	Jonny EVANS (NI)	(25) 02.01.88
3	Patrice EVRA (Fra)	(32) 15.05.81
22	FABIO (Bra)	(23) 09.07.90
5	Rio FERDINAND	(34) 07.11.78
4	Phil JONES	(21) 21.02.92
38	Michael KEANE	(20) 11.01.93
2	RAFAEL (Bra)	(23) 09.07.90
12	Chris SMALLING	(23) 22.11.89
30	Guillermo VARELA (Uru)	(20) 24.03.93
15	Nemanja VIDIC (Ser)	(31) 21.10.81
MIDFIELDERS		
8	ANDERSON (Bra)	(25) 13.04.88
16	Michael CARRICK	(32) 28.07.81
23	Tom CLEVERLEY	(24) 12.08.89
31	Marouane FELLAINI (Blg)	(25) 22.11.87
24	Darren FLETCHER (Sco)	(29) 01.02.84
11	Ryan GIGGS (Wal)	(39) 29.11.73
44	Adnan JANUZAJ (Blg)	(18) 05.02.95
26	Shinji KAGAWA (Jap)	(24) 17.03.89
17	NANI (Por)	(26) 17.11.86
25	Antonio VALENCIA (Ecu)	(28) 04.08.85
18	Ashley YOUNG	(28) 09.07.85
FORWARDS		
14	Javier HERNANDEZ (Mex)	(25) 01.06.88
10	Wayne ROONEY	(27) 24.10.85
20	Robin VAN PERSIE (Hol)	(30) 06.08.83
19	Danny WELBECK	(22) 26.11.90
29	Wilfried ZAHA	(20) 10.11.92
MANAGER		
	David MOYES (Sco)	(50) 25.04.63

NEWCASTLE UTD

GOALKEEPERS		
42	Jak ALNWICK	(20) 17.06.93
21	Robert ELLIOT (RoI)	(27) 30.04.86
1	Tim KRUL (Hol)	(25) 03.04.88
DEFENDERS		
8	Vurnon ANITA (Hol)	(24) 04.04.89
2	Fabrizio COLOCCINI (Arg)	(31) 22.01.82
26	Mathieu DEBUCHY (Fra)	(28) 28.07.85
36	Paul DUMMETT (Wal)	(22) 26.09.91
33	Curtis GOOD (Aus)	(20) 23.03.93
19	Massadio HAADARA (Sen)	(20) 02.12.92
3	Davide SANTON (Ita)	(22) 02.01.91
34	James TAVERNIER	(21) 31.10.91
16	Ryan TAYLOR	(29) 19.08.84
27	Steven TAYLOR	(27) 23.01.86
6	Michael WILLIAMSON	(29) 08.11.83
13	Mapou YANGA-MBIWA (Fra)	(24) 15.05.89
MIDFIELDERS		
20	Gael BIGIRIMANA	(19) 22.10.93
4	Yohan CABAYE (Fra)	(27) 14.01.86
18	Jonas GUTIERREZ (Arg)	(31) 05.07.82
22	Sylvain MARVEAUX (Fra)	(27) 15.04.86
7	Moussa SISSOKO (Fra)	(24) 16.08.89
24	Cheik TIOTE (IvC)	(27) 21.06.86
29	Haris VUCKIC (Sln)	(21) 21.08.92
FORWARDS		
28	Sammy AMEOBI	(21) 01.05.92
23	Shola AMEOBI (Nga)	(32) 12.10.81
10	Hatem BEN ARFA (Fra)	(26) 07.03.87
49	Adam CAMPBELL	(18) 01.01.95
9	Papiss CISSE (Sen)	(28) 03.06.85
11	Yoan GOUFFRAN (Fra)	(27) 25.05.86
25	Gabriel OBERTAN (Fra)	(24) 26.02.89
14	Loic REMY (Fra)	(26) 02.01.87
MANAGER		
	Alan PARDEW	(52) 18.07.61

NORWICH CITY

GOALKEEPERS		
13	Mark BUNN	(28) 16.11.84
20	Carlo NASH	(40) 13.09.73
1	John RUDDY	(26) 24.10.86
DEFENDERS		
26	Daniel AYALA (Spa)	(22) 07.11.90
5	Sebastien BASSONG (Cam)	(27) 09.07.86
24	Ryan BENNETT	(23) 06.03.90
18	Javier GARRIDO (Spa)	(28) 15.03.85
2	Russell MARTIN (Sco)	(27) 04.01.86
23	Martin OLSSON (Swe)	(25) 17.05.88
6	Michael TURNER	(29) 09.11.83
3	Steven WHITTAKER (Sco)	(29) 16.06.84
MIDFIELDERS		
17	Elliott BENNETT	(24) 18.12.88
10	Leroy FER (Hol)	(23) 05.01.90
14	Wesley HOOLAHAN (RoI)	(31) 20.05.82
8	Jonathan HOWSON	(25) 21.05.88
4	Bradley JOHNSON	(26) 28.04.87
22	Nathan REDMOND	(19) 06.03.94
27	Alexander TETTEY (Nor)	(27) 04.04.86
FORWARDS		
19	Luciano BECCHIO (Arg)	(29) 28.12.83
16	Johan ELMANDER (Swe)	(32) 27.05.81
11	Gary HOOPER	(25) 26.01.88
30	Jamar LOZA (Jam)	(19) 10.05.94
12	Anthony PILKINGTON (RoI)	(25) 06.06.88
7	Robert SNODGRASS (Sco)	(26) 07.09.87
9	Ricky VAN WOLFSWINKEL (Hol)	(24) 27.01.89
MANAGER		
	Chris HUGHTON (RoI)	(54) 11.12.58

SOUTHAMPTON

GOALKEEPERS		
31	Artur BORUC (Pol)	(33) 20.02.80
1	Kelvin DAVIS	(37) 29.09.76
25	Paulo GAZZANIGA (Arg)	(21) 02.01.92
DEFENDERS		
2	Nathaniel CLYNE	(22) 05.04.91
6	Jose FONTE (Por)	(29) 22.12.83
13	Danny FOX (Sco)	(27) 29.05.86
26	Jos HOOIVELD (Hol)	(30) 22.04.83
5	Dejan LOVREN (Cro)	(24) 05.07.89
23	Luke SHAW	(18) 12.07.95
35	Jack STEPHENS	(19) 27.01.94
3	Maya YOSHIDA (Jap)	(25) 24.08.88
MIDFIELDERS		
22	Calum CHAMBERS	(18) 20.01.95
18	Jack CORK	(24) 25.06.89
8	Steven DAVIS (NI)	(28) 01.01.85
21	Guilherme DO PRADO (Bra)	(31) 31.12.81
27	Lloyd ISGROVE	(20) 12.01.93
10	Gaston RAMIREZ (Uru)	(22) 02.12.90
38	Harrison REED	(18) 27.01.95
37	Omar ROWE	(18) 30.10.94
4	Morgan SCHNEIDERLIN (Fra)	(23) 08.11.89
12	Victor WANYAMA (Ken)	(22) 25.06.91
16	James WARD-PROWSE	(18) 01.11.94
FORWARDS		
20	Adam LALLANA	(25) 10.05.88
7	Rickie LAMBERT	(31) 16.02.82
19	Tadanari LEE (Jap)	(27) 19.12.85
17	Pablo OSVALDO (Ita)	(27) 12.01.86
9	Jay RODRIGUEZ	(24) 29.07.89
39	Jake SINCLAIR	(18) 29.11.94
MANAGER		
	Mauricio POCHETTINO (Arg)	(41) 02.03.72

STOKE CITY

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Asmir BEGOVIC (Bos)	(26) 20.06.87
29	Thomas SORENSEN (Den)	(37) 12.06.76
DEFENDERS		
20	Geoff CAMERON (USA)	(28) 11.07.85
4	Robert HUTH (Ger)	(29) 18.08.84
5	Marc MUNIESA (Spa)	(21) 27.03.92
3	Erik PIETERS (Hol)	(25) 07.08.88
17	Ryan SHAWCROSS	(26) 04.10.87
28	Andy WILKINSON	(29) 06.08.84
12	Marc WILSON (RoI)	(26) 17.08.87
MIDFIELDERS		
16	Charlie ADAM (Sco)	(27) 10.12.85
24	Oussama ASSAIDI (Mor)	(25) 05.08.88
13	Maurice EDU (USA)	(27) 18.04.86
26	Matthew ETHERINGTON	(32) 14.08.81
32	Stephen IRELAND (RoI)	(27) 22.08.86
34	Jordan KEANE	(20) 19.09.93
14	Jamie NESS (Sco)	(22) 02.03.91
15	Steven N'ZONZI (Fra)	(24) 15.12.88
8	Wilson PALACIOS (Hon)	(29) 29.07.84
7	Jermaine PENNANT	(30) 15.01.83
11	Brek SHEA (USA)	(23) 28.02.90
6	Glenn WHELAN (RoI)	(29) 13.01.84
FORWARDS		
10	Marko ARNAUTOVIC (Aut)	(24) 19.04.89
25	Peter CROUCH	(32) 30.01.81
9	Kenwyne JONES (T&T)	(29) 05.10.84
19	Jonathan WALTERS (RoI)	(30) 20.09.83
MANAGER		
	Mark HUGHES (Wal)	(49) 01.11.63

SUNDERLAND

GOALKEEPERS		
25	Vito MANNONE (Ita)	(25) 02.03.88
20	Keiren WESTWOOD (RoI)	(28) 23.10.84
DEFENDERS		
5	Wes BROWN	(34) 13.10.79
12	Ondrej CELUSTKA (CzR)	(24) 18.06.89
24	Carlos CUELLAR (Spa)	(32) 23.08.81
21	Modibo DIAKITE (Fra)	(26) 02.03.87
3	Andrea DOSSENA (Ita)	(32) 11.09.81
29	Valentin ROBERGE (Fra)	(26) 09.06.87
16	John O'SHEA (RoI)	(32) 30.04.81
MIDFIELDERS		
22	El-Hajdi BA (Fra)	(20) 05.03.93
6	CABRAL (CVI)	(24) 22.10.88
33	Lee CATTERMOLE	(25) 21.03.88
14	Jack COLBACK	(23) 24.10.89
8	Craig GARDNER	(26) 25.11.86
23	Emanuele GIACCHERINI (Ita)	(28) 05.05.85
11	Adam JOHNSON	(26) 14.07.87
4	KI Sung-yong (SKo)	(24) 24.01.89
7	Sebastian LARSSON (Swe)	(28) 06.06.85
35	Charalambos MAVRIAS (Gre)	(19) 21.02.94
19	David MOBERG KARLSSON (Swe)	(19) 20.03.94
15	David VAUGHAN (Wal)	(30) 18.02.83
FORWARDS		
17	Jozy ALTIDORE (USA)	(23) 06.11.89
31	Fabio BORINI (Ita)	(22) 29.03.91
9	Steven FLETCHER (Sco)	(26) 26.03.87
27	JI Dong-won (SKo)	(22) 28.05.91
18	Mikael MANDRON (Sco)	(19) 11.10.94
10	Connor WICKHAM	(20) 31.03.93
MANAGER		
	Gus POYET (Uru)	(45) 15.11.67

SWANSEA CITY

GOALKEEPERS		
25	Gerhard TREMMEL (Ger)	(34) 16.11.78
1	Michel VORM (Hol)	(29) 20.10.83
45	Gregor ZABRET (Sln)	(18) 18.08.95
DEFENDERS		
35	Daniel ALFEI (Wal)	(21) 23.02.92
2	Jordi AMAT (Spa)	(21) 21.03.92
4	CHICO (Spa)	(26) 06.03.87
33	Ben DAVIES (Wal)	(20) 24.04.93
16	Garry MONK	(34) 06.03.79
28	Curtis OBENG	(24) 14.02.89
22	Angel RANGEL (Spa)	(30) 28.10.82
23	Darnel SITU (Fra)	(21) 18.03.92
3	Neil TAYLOR (Wal)	(24) 07.02.89
19	Dwight TIENDALLI (Hol)	(27) 21.10.85
6	Ashley WILLIAMS (Wal)	(29) 23.08.84
MIDFIELDERS		
7	Leon BRITTON	(31) 16.09.82
21	Jose CANAS (Spa)	(26) 27.05.87
20	Jonathan DE GUZMAN (Hol)	(26) 13.09.87
12	Nathan DYER	(25) 29.11.87
11	Pablo HERNANDEZ (Spa)	(28) 11.04.85
15	Wayne ROUTLEDGE	(28) 07.01.85
8	Jonjo SHELVEY	(21) 27.02.92
FORWARDS		
10	Wilfried BONY (IvC)	(24) 10.12.88
41	Rory DONNELLY (NI)	(21) 18.02.92
14	Roland LAMAH (Blg)	(25) 31.12.87
18	Leroy LITA	(28) 28.12.84
9	MICHU (Spa)	(27) 21.03.86
24	Alejandro POZUELO (Spa)	(22) 20.09.91
26	Alvaro VAZQUEZ (Spa)	(22) 27.04.91
MANAGER		
	Michael LAUDRUP (Den)	(49) 15.06.64

TOTTENHAM H

GOALKEEPERS		
24	Brad FRIEDEL (USA)	(42) 18.05.71
1	Heurelho GOMES (Bra)	(32) 15.02.81
25	Hugo LLORIS (Fra)	(26) 26.12.86
DEFENDERS		
6	Vlad CHIRICHES (Rom)	(23) 14.11.89
20	Michael DAWSON	(29) 18.11.83
35	Zeki FRYERS	(21) 09.09.92
4	Younes KABOUL (Fra)	(27) 04.01.86
16	Kyle NAUGHTON	(24) 11.11.88
3	Danny ROSE	(23) 02.07.90
5	Jan VERTONGHEN (Blg)	(26) 24.04.87
2	Kyle WALKER	(23) 28.05.90
MIDFIELDERS		
15	Etienne CAPOUE (Fra)	(25) 11.07.88
21	Nacer CHADLI (Blg)	(24) 02.08.89
19	Mousa DEMBELE (Blg)	(26) 16.07.87
23	Christian ERIKSEN (Den)	(21) 14.02.92
14	Lewis HOLTBY (Ger)	(23) 18.09.90
11	Erik LAMELA (Arg)	(21) 04.03.92
7	Aaron LENNON	(26) 16.04.87
8	PAULINHO (Bra)	(25) 25.07.88
30	SANDRO (Bra)	(24) 15.03.89
22	Gylfi SIGURDSSON (Ice)	(24) 08.09.89
17	Andros TOWNSEND	(22) 16.07.91
FORWARDS		
10	Emmanuel ADEBAYOR (Tog)	(29) 26.02.84
18	Jermain DEFOE	(31) 07.10.82
37	Harry KANE	(20) 28.07.93
9	Roberto SOLDADO (Spa)	(28) 27.05.85
MANAGER		
	Andre VILLAS-BOAS (Por)	(36) 17.10.77

WEST BROM ALB

GOALKEEPERS		
12	Lee CAMP (NI)	(29) 22.08.84
19	Luke DANIELS	(25) 05.01.88
1	Ben FOSTER	(30) 03.04.83
13	Boaz MYHILL (Wal)	(30) 09.11.82
DEFENDERS		
25	Craig DAWSON	(23) 06.05.90
28	Billy JONES	(26) 24.03.87
14	Diego LUGANO (Uru)	(32) 02.11.80
23	Gareth McAULEY (NI)	(33) 05.12.79
3	Jonas OLSSON (Swe)	(30) 10.03.83
40	Liam O'NEIL	(20) 31.07.93
4	Goran POPOV (Mac)	(29) 02.10.84
6	Liam RIDGEWELL	(29) 21.07.84
MIDFIELDERS		
18	Morgan AMALFITANO (Fra)	(28) 20.03.85
11	Chris BRUNT (NI)	(28) 14.12.84
17	Graham DORRANS (Sco)	(26) 05.05.87
22	Zoltan GERA (Hun)	(34) 22.04.79
7	James MORRISON (Sco)	(27) 25.05.86
21	Youssuf MULUMBU (DRC)	(26) 25.01.87
2	Steven REID (RoI)	(32) 10.03.81
34	Kemar ROOFE	(20) 06.01.93
29	Stephane SESSEGNON (Ben)	(29) 01.06.84
10	Scott SINCLAIR	(24) 25.03.89
15	George THORNE	(20) 04.01.93
5	Claudio YACOB (Arg)	(26) 18.07.87
FORWARDS		
39	Nicolas ANELKA (Fra)	(34) 14.03.79
16	Victor ANICHEBE (Nga)	(25) 23.04.88
38	Saido BERAHINO	(20) 04.08.93
9	Shane LONG (RoI)	(26) 22.01.87
36	Adil NABI	(19) 28.02.94
8	Markus ROSENBERG (Swe)	(31) 27.09.82
20	Matej VYDRA (CzR)	(21) 01.05.92
MANAGER		
	Steve CLARKE (Sco)	(50) 29.08.63

WEST HAM UTD

GOALKEEPERS		
13	ADRIAN (Spa)	(26) 03.01.87
22	Jussi JAASKELAINEN (Fin)	(38) 19.04.75
DEFENDERS		
37	Leo CHAMBERS	(18) 05.08.95
19	James COLLINS (Wal)	(30) 23.08.83
20	Guy DEMEL (IvC)	(32) 13.06.81
3	George McCARTNEY (NI)	(32) 29.04.81
8	Razvan RAT (Rom)	(32) 26.05.81
2	Winston REID (NZ)	(25) 03.07.88
5	James TOMKINS	(24) 29.03.89
MIDFIELDERS		
26	Joe COLE	(31) 08.11.81
21	Mohamed DIAME (Sen)	(26) 14.06.87
18	Alou DIARRA (Fra)	(32) 15.07.81
23	Stewart DOWNING	(29) 22.07.84
7	Matthew JARVIS	(27) 22.05.86
35	Sebastian LLETGET (USA)	(21) 03.09.92
15	Ravel MORRISON	(20) 02.02.93
16	Mark NOBLE	(26) 08.05.87
4	Kevin NOLAN	(31) 24.06.82
17	Joey O'BRIEN (RoI)	(27) 17.02.86
33	Pelly RUDDOCK	(20) 17.07.93
14	Matthew TAYLOR	(31) 27.11.81
FORWARDS		
9	Andy CARROLL	(24) 06.01.89
32	Elliott LEE	(18) 16.12.94
11	Modibo MAIGA (Mli)	(27) 03.09.86
30	Mladen PETRIC (Cro)	(32) 01.01.81
12	Ricardo VAZ TE (Por)	(27) 01.10.86
MANAGER		
	Sam ALLARDYCE	(58) 19.10.54

World Soccer's GREAT TEAMS

Dynamo Kiev 1986

Soviet coach Lobanovskyi triumphs in Europe with Dynamo for a second time

Success....the scorer of Dynamo's second goal in their 3-0 win against Atletico Madrid, Blokhin lifts the European Cup-winners Cup

Eleven years after Valeriy Lobanovskyi had guided Dynamo Kiev to their first European Cup-winners Cup success, with a victory over Ferencvaros, the club repeated the feat with a 3-0 annihilation of Luis Aragones' Atletico Madrid at the Stade de Gerland in Lyon.

In fact, Dynamo were so impressive throughout the 1985-86 campaign that they won every home leg in the competition – plus the Final – by at least three goals.

Dynamo dominated Atletico from the start with Aleksandr Zavarov, the scorer of the first goal after just five minutes, dictating the play throughout – until he had to limp off midway through the second half.

Lobanovskyi liked his team to play a hard-pressing style, defending as a unit and adopting a precise passing game when in possession. They could also break on the counter-attack, and this was epitomised by a brilliant second goal.

Vasyl Rats advanced down the left before drawing in two opponents and passing inside to Igor Belanov. He took two touches and, without looking, laid the ball off to his right for the advancing substitute Vadym Yevtushenko as a defender closed him down. The sub flicked the ball right to the overlapping Oleg Blokhin, who ran onto the pass and neatly steered the ball over the Atletico keeper.

It secured victory, yet there was still time for Yevtushenko to add a third, leaving the despondent Aragones to admit: "We just didn't have a chance."

A month later, more than half of Dynamo's successful team would represent a Lobanovskyi-coached Soviet Union at the World Cup in Mexico, providing nine of the players for the team that lost 4-3 to Belgium in the second round, despite a hat-trick from Belanov. WS

THE COACH AND HIS TEAM

Valeriy Lobanovskyi

Renowned for his highly scientific yet harsh disciplinarian style of management, he had three spells as coach of Dynamo, winning a total of 13 league titles, nine domestic cups and the European Cup-winners Cup twice.

He also coached at international level, with three stints in charge of the Soviet Union's national side, plus spells at the helm with the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Ukraine.

He died in 2002, aged 63.

Tactics

Lobanovskyi called his style of play "universality" and coached his team to attack and defend as one. When in possession, Dynamo would keep the playing area as large as possible, and when defending they would press and reduce the space.

Full-backs Bessonov and Demyanenko inter-changed with Yaremchuk and Rats, while Yakovenko played a deep role and Zavarov linked with the forwards.

THE STARTING XI

Viktor Chanov
Goalkeeper
Joined the club from Shakhtar Donetsk and played in the 1986 Final despite a hand injury.

Sergei Baltacha
Sweeper
Snapped his Achilles in the Final. Played in Scotland and is now a coach at Charlton Athletic.

Volodymyr Bessonov
Defender
A quick, attacking full-back who was used by Lobanovskyi in several positions, including midfield.

Oleg Kuznetsov
Defender
Central defender who won three Soviet championships before adding four Scottish titles with Rangers.

Anatoliy Demyanenko
Defender
Captain and left-back, he won 14 trophies with Dynamo. Could have been an ice hockey professional.

Pavlo Yakovenko
Midfield
Regular for club and country in the mid-1980s until injuries seriously affected his career.

Ivan Yaremchuk
Midfield
Played on the right side of midfield and linked well with Bessonov and Belanov down the flank.

Vasyl Rats
Midfield
Used by Lobanovskyi on the left of midfield but could also play at full-back. Packed a powerful shot.

Aleksandr Zavarov
Midfield
Scored the first goal in the Final and was inspirational until he was injured in the second half.

Igor Belanov
Forward
A great disciple of the Lobanovskyi style, he was voted European Footballer of the Year in 1986.

Oleg Blokhin
Forward
Scored against Atletico Madrid in 1986 – and against Ferencvaros in the Final 11 years earlier.

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